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ETHNIC TRINITIES AND THEIR RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN TRINITY. Crown 8vo, $1.75 *net*.

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THE ETHNIC TRINITIES

AND THEIR RELATIONS TO THE CHRISTIAN TRINITY

A CHAPTER IN THE

Comparative History of Religions.

BY

LEVI LEONARD PAINE

WALDO PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN BANGOR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

"The true criticism of Dogma is its history"
DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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1901

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TO

YALE UNIVERSITY

MY ALMA MATER

WHOSE FREE AND TOLERANT SPIRIT TOOK FULL
POSSESSION OF ME IN MY COLLEGE DAYS, AND
HAS CONTINUED TO BE THE SPRING OF
MY INTELLECTUAL LIFE

AND TO

PROFESSOR GEORGE P. FISHER

DEAN OF YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL

WHO SO ADMIRABLY ILLUSTRATES IN HIS LIFE AND
WRITINGS THE CHARACTER OF THE INSTITUTION
WHICH HE ADORNS, THIS LATEST FRUIT
OF MY HISTORICAL STUDIES
IS DEDICATED

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PREFACE

The comparative history of religions is the latest and most productive field of investigation and discovery that historical science has opened. The field as a whole is vast in extent and complex and intricate in its character. This book deals with a single chapter of it. I was led to the study of the Ethnic trinities by my previous studies in the historical evolution of the Christian trinity, — finding as I did that Christian trinitarianism is only a part of a world-wide historical evolution that goes back to the very origins of religion itself. Thus, while the present volume is an entirely fresh and independent work, it may properly be regarded as a companion of my previous book: "A Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism, and its Outcome in the New Christology." Its object is to carry the history of trinitarianism back of its later Christian form of development, and trace its primary sources as well as its historical evolution through the various Ethnic trinities until it enters its Christian stage, and then to compare with each other these different stages of

religious thought and draw from such comparison its historical conclusions.

It may be made a point of criticism by some of my readers that I have entered so deeply and fully into the philosophical development of Greek trinitarian thought; but my apology is that an accurate knowledge of New Platonism, and above all of Plotinus, is absolutely essential to the understanding of Christian mediæval philosophy and theology, and of the modern ideas that have been evolved from them. Scholars are coming to realize — what until recently has been little appreciated — that Plotinus was the most original and acute philosophical thinker since Plato and Aristotle, and that his influence to-day has eclipsed that of his great masters. In fact, the Plotinian pantheistic monism is increasingly regnant in modern philosophy, not to say in Christian theology. It may be said that not a few of the historical and metaphysical blunders that have had vogue in past histories of Christian doctrine have arisen from ignorance of those later transformations of Platonism which are so clearly set forth in the speculations of Plotinus.

While I have restricted myself to a single phase of the general history of religions, it should be borne in mind that the evolution of the idea of God is central to all religious thought, and con-

sequently that the subject-matter of this book will be found to include more or less directly many of the fundamental problems of theology. Like the earlier volume it is purely historical and critical, not dogmatic, resting entirely on the scientific inductive method; and it will, I believe, furnish a new illustration of the truth of Strauss's words, adopted as a motto on the title-page: "The true criticism of dogma is its history."

If there are any who have been indisposed to accept the statements and conclusions of my previous book, I cannot doubt that the perusal of this one will overcome such indisposition, unless indeed their minds are proof against all purely historical evidence; while to those who are ready to accept the divine revelations that are given in nature and history this new volume will, I am sure, bring new satisfaction. They will learn more fully perhaps than ever before that the world as a whole, not only in the realm of nature and natural law, but also in the history of man as a religious being, is full of divinity and of the proofs of a divine movement of love, and so will be able to read with a new sense of their profound meaning Browning's lines: —

> "The earth is crammed with heaven
> And every common bush afire with God."

LEVI L. PAINE.

Bangor, Me., April, 1901.

CONTENTS

PART I

THE ETHNIC TRINITIES

Chap.		Page
I.	Preliminary Survey	3
II.	Special Causes of the Rise of the Ethnic Trinities	14
III.	General Character and Relations of the Ethnic Trinities	31
IV.	The Hindoo Brahmanic Trinity	37
V.	The Persian Zoroastrian Trinitarianism	64
VI.	The Greek Homeric Trinity	92
VII.	The Evolution of the Greek Philosophical Trinitarianism	124
VIII.	The Greek Plotinian Trinity	152

PART II

THE RELATIONS OF THE ETHNIC TRINITIES TO THE CHRISTIAN TRINITY

I.	The External or Historical Relations	191
II.	The Internal Relations — Resemblances	219
III.	The Internal Relations — Differences	270
IV.	The Providential Mission of Christianity as a World-Religion	281
V.	The Unreadiness of Christendom for the Fulfillment of its Mission	291
VI.	Two Perils of Organized Christianity — I. Ignorance	299
VII.	Two Perils of Organized Christianity — II. Insincerity	306
VIII.	The New Problem of Theology in the Twentieth Century	340

Index 371

PART I

THE ETHNIC TRINITIES

"Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. He who hears what praying there is for light and clear knowledge to be sent down among us would think of other matters to be constituted beyond the discipline of Geneva, framed and fabricked already to our hands. Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy and oppose, if it come not first in at their casements. What a collusion is this, when as we are exhorted by the wise man to use diligence "to seek for wisdom as for hidden treasures" early and late, that another order shall enjoin us to know nothing but by statute? When a man hath been laboring the hardest labor in the deep mines of knowledge, hath furnished out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reasons as it were a battle ranged, scattered and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adversary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and sun, if he please, only that he may try the matter by dint of argument; for his opponents then to skulk, to lay ambushments, to keep a narrow bridge of licensing where the challenger should pass, though it be valor enough in soldiership, is but weakness and cowardice in the wars of truth." — JOHN MILTON.

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY SURVEY

This book proposes a comparative study of the Ethnic and Christian trinities. Recent investigations in the history of religions have given a new aspect to this subject, and have entirely changed the view to be taken of the historical relation of the Christian ideas of God and those of other religions, and especially of the trinitarian doctrine of God as existing in a trinity of persons or of personal forms. This change has been brought about in two ways. In the first place, scientific and historical studies have developed new conceptions of the unity that underlies phenomena and events, of the universality of law, and of the evolution of all things along the lines of natural and moral causes. This principle of evolution first became evident in the processes of the physical world, and has been adopted as a cardinal axiom of science; but it has been proved to be equally a fundamental force in all historical events. A historical evolution according to fixed historical laws is as surely working in human affairs as a natural evolution is working in all the movements of the material universe. An essential difference, however, is to

be noted between physical and historical evolution. The latter is moral, involving the element of human free agency, with its consequent variability of human action, while the former is under strict physical law, and so fixed and invariable. But the moral kingdom is as truly one of law and evolution as the natural. The power of free will is not a mere erratic and unaccountable form of activity; it has its own mysterious laws, and these laws work in harmony with all the laws of the universe, and play their proper part in the grand evolution of the world's history. For it must be recognized at once that all recent scientific discoveries tend towards a single result, namely, that one ultimate law of life and movement includes every form of existence, and produces one system of things which we call the universe. The old Platonic idea that this cosmos in which man has his place is an animal with a world-soul contains an element of scientific truth. The universe is one living organic whole, under the guidance of one active force or combination of forces, and all individual living things are held within its eternal sway. What is called the law of natural evolution is simply the last word and summary of all the scientific laws and principles that all recent investigations, from Copernicus, Kepler, and Newton, down to the latest discoveries of the present day, have brought to light. That law, in the very nature of things, can allow no exception. To break it once is to break it up forever, and dissolve the order of the

world. Evolution is a process, the result of life, and so long as there is life, so long will it work according to the divine laws of its own nature in a ceaseless progress towards its highest ends. Man is mysteriously included in this great world system, and so we must expect that the law of evolution will reveal itself in human history as well as in physical science, and hence it is that what is called the scientific and inductive method of study and investigation is also the method of the true historian.

This universal evolutionary law or principle finds special illustration in the history of the world's religions. Comparative religion — almost the youngest of the sciences, and which is destined to revolutionize theology and philosophy in many points, shedding new light as it does on the origin and wide prevalence of ideas and beliefs supposed to be unique, and the possession of a few favored men — gives conclusive proof of the fact that all the religions of mankind have been the result of a slow and wide development under a law of evolution that is universal in its range. To this law Christianity, as a system of religious beliefs and dogmas, forms no exception. Every article of the Christian creed is the full flower of a long historical evolution. The dogma of the trinity is a conspicuous example. Whatever be the truth as to the mode of the Divine Being, whether he really exists in personal unity, or in personal trinity, or is pluralized in all the gods of heathen polytheism,

it is a historical fact which cannot be gainsaid, that the Christian trinitarian dogma as set forth in the Nicene Creed was the slow growth of centuries, starting from a single new point of religious belief, and unfolding itself step by step through successive accretions of religious thought gathered from various historical sources, passing from unity to duality, and from duality to trinity, then moving on from a lower inchoate trinitarian stage to one higher and more complete, until out of controversy and schism the full Nicene *homoousian* doctrine was reached. Thus the Christian dogma of the trinity as a historical evolution is to be classed with the other trinities of the Ethnic religions, and should be studied with them, as together forming a single chapter in the comparative history of religions.

This new scientific view of the historical relation of the Ethnic and Christian trinities has been amply sustained and illustrated by the recent historical discoveries in the field of the Ethnic religions. That some of these religions contained divine triads had been a recognized fact of long standing; but its real significance was not appreciated, and a scientific and critical study of the trinitarian elements and an estimate of their relation to the Christian trinity had never been attempted. The new researches, however, go much farther. They reveal trinities of varied forms and developments in almost all the Ethnic religions. Such trinities are found in the theogonies of the

Egyptians, the Chaldæans, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Hindoos, the Gaulish-Celts, the Teutonic-Scandinavians, the Greeks and Romans, the Phrygians, the Persians, the Chinese, the American tribes, Hawaiians, Polynesians. That trinities should be so widely spread among the different peoples and races of the world is certainly a fact of great religious significance, and a historical study of these trinities should yield some fruitful religious and theological lessons. Such a study is especially needful in view of the fact that Christian traditional theology is founded upon assumptions that are entirely at variance with the results of the new science of comparative religion, particularly in the field of historical evolution. These assumptions are centred in the idea that God made a special, supernatural revelation of himself and of his mode of existence to the first progenitors of the race. Monotheism, or the doctrine of one God, was supposed to be a part of that primeval revelation. Polytheism was regarded as a perversion of the original faith, brought about by human sin and depravity which darkened the understanding and corrupted the will. This doctrine of the fall and original sinfulness of the race was based on the acceptance of the account in Genesis of the temptation of Adam and Eve by the serpent as historical truth. Paul became the most influential expounder of it. He was a true Jew, and accepted the traditional Rabbinical theory of the plenary inspiration of the Old Testament

Scriptures. Hence his philosophy of heathenism, namely, that sinful and fallen men "did not like to retain God in their knowledge," so that God gave them over to the delusions of polytheism and idolatry. But these views of Paul, which have been so influential with later Christian theologians, have no historical basis. It is a piece of Jewish traditionalism which the Jewish convert, Paul, carried with him into the Christian church. Monotheism, so far from being the earliest doctrine of God, is a late development of human thought. It involves a long process of analysis and synthesis in the observation and investigation of the external world. In the beginnings of human experience man saw only particular phenomena. The unity of nature was unperceived. The world was filled with separate causalities and agencies. The idea of a first cause behind all the original activities of nature was a flight of reflective thought to which those first children of the race were utterly unequal. Polytheism was the natural and spontaneous religion of the primeval world. The sentence, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," — a statement that seems so ancient to us, as we read it in the first chapter of Genesis, — is in reality modern, when seen in its true historical place in the long evolution of man's ideas of God. The writer of that sentence had behind him many centuries of Hebrew thought and faith, and behind the oldest Hebrew was his Chaldæan ancestor, with his polytheistic creation

myth left on record for us, fortunately, in the resurrected clay tablets of Nineveh. I have spoken of the earliest members of our race as children. Such indeed they were. Their gaze upon the outer world around them was like that of the rustic in Pollock's "Course of Time" who —

> "Thought the visual line that girt him round,
> The world's extreme; and thought the silver moon,
> That nightly o'er him led her virgin host,
> No broader than his father's shield."

In that primeval time the imagination was the chief interpreter to man of nature and its powers. It was man's religious imagination that turned the sun into a god, and filled sky, air, earth, and sea with multitudinous divine beings. With the development of the reflective and rational faculties man began to read in nature the signs of order, law, and unity. Then followed the tendency to find a headship among the various divinities of the vast polytheistic pantheon. Here the trinitarian idea, which so many analogies and indications of tripleness in nature and man had suggested, came in to help. Trinities became the superior gods, and this step became a half-way house to another, namely, the idea of a first god among the three, like Brahma in the Hindoo *trimurti*, Zeus among the Greeks, and Jupiter among the Romans. But monotheism was not easily made congenial to the polytheistic mind, and remained the idea of the cultured and philosophic few. The trinitarian conception, however, was more easily accepted. It

satisfied the sense of plurality, and also met in a degree the need of a higher unity. It was at this trinitarian stage of polytheistic limitation that the Ethnic religions mostly stopped. Only in several of the Ethnic philosophies, as they should be rather called in distinction from the popular religions that were based upon them, was a theistic or pantheistic unitarianism reached. That such a trinitarian half-way house should have been erected between the most unrestricted polytheism and the most abstract unitarianism, and have remained as the traditional abiding-place of Ethnic religions, is seen to be most natural, when we note how easily Christian theologians were led to use this device as a support of their own trinitarian doctrine. The Christian trinity was held up in early Christian apologies as the golden mean between a crude heathen polytheism, on the one hand, and a stark Jewish monotheism, on the other. Even modern apologists have employed the same device. So astute and accomplished a theologian as Henry B. Smith declares that the old Biblical and Platonic theistic doctrine of God as a uni-personal being is in fact a form of deism, and he substitutes for it a trinitarian theism of his own, namely, that God exists as an absolute uni-personality, while not uni-personal but tri-personal, — a form of doctrine which seems to me utterly self-destructive, and is a strange theism indeed.

The trinitarian idea has a similar relation to the pantheistic philosophies which were developed

out of the original polytheistic religions. These philosophies sought to bring the popular polytheism into harmonious relation with the metaphysical conception of a divine unity. This was accomplished by an evolution theory according to which one primal being became the original cause of all multiform existence. All individual gods were mere emanations from a single monad, — different modifications of one divine Being. This logical rather than scientific evolution — for it had no scientific basis — started from a speculative unity, but made no further use of it, except as a transcendental background for the trinitarian stage to which it moved at once, and which was made the real ποῦ στῶ or centre of the whole system. Why the triads should have had so prominent a place in this pantheistic theory is not very clear, since it was only a single step in a descending series. Yet in fact the trinities of the pantheistic philosophies are the most definite and fixed of all the Ethnic trinities, and in them the line of division is sharply drawn between the gods who form these trinities and the other numerous gods who complete the evolution. This is the case with the Hindoo trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, Civa, and still more clearly with the New Platonic or Plotinian "three hypostases," — τὸ ἕν, ὁ νοῦς, ἡ ψυχή.

We have thus seen that monotheism, historically considered, is the end of an ascending series of beliefs concerning God, rather than the beginning of a descending series, and that history inverts the traditional view.

The same result is reached in that modification of monotheism which is found in the Christian dogma of the trinity. This dogma has also been traditionally held to be a part of the original revelation of God to the race. It was supposed to be found in the Old Testament. Christ was believed to have taught the elements of it in his interpretations of the Scriptures concerning himself. Augustine held that the first verses of Genesis contained a trinitarian reference. This idea likewise is without historical foundation. The Ethnic trinities are a comparatively late development in the history of religious thought when viewed from the side of the remote past, though ancient when looked at from the standpoint of later historical times. It is to be remembered that the prehistoric ages cover by far the longest period in the vast process of the life of the world. All authentic history is but a modern chapter of the earth's annals as a whole. As to the Old Testament, it contains the history of a vigorous and radical reaction from the Ethnic polytheism to monotheism, and its strong insistence on the doctrine of one God made the development of the trinitarian dogma impossible. The Christian trinity was historically a new development out of Jewish monotheism, in consequence of the doctrine that grew about the person of Jesus Christ, though it obtained the materials from which it was formed from earlier Greek philosophical thought. It is also to be noted that the Ethnic trinities as well as the Christian exhibit

long and definite stages in their evolution. The most complete trinities are of late date. The Hindoo *trimurti* did not reach its final stage till the fifth or sixth century of our era, though its origin dates from pre-Christian times. The Plotinian New Platonic trinity, the most perfect trinity as a speculative metaphysical theory that has ever been conceived, belongs to the third century A. D. So the Christian trinity required four centuries for its complete development in the Nicene and pseudo-Athanasian creeds.

CHAPTER II

SPECIAL CAUSES OF THE RISE OF THE ETHNIC TRINITIES

From this preliminary survey we pass to a closer investigation of the historical origin and character of the Ethnic trinities. Their origin is hid in the obscurity of the prehistoric ages. When the Ethnic religions first appear under clear historical light they are already polytheistic, and the trinitarian feature is more or less fully developed. In the latest authoritative book [1] on the Babylonian religion and mythology, it is stated that "we can thus trace back the existence of this great triad of gods (Anu, Bel, and Ea) to the very beginning of history." This is equally true of the Egyptian and the Hindoo trinities. Thus an investigation of the causes that led to their development must be conducted with such side lights as are afforded us from early man's religious nature and environment and from the forms into which these trinities were moulded. The radical question is, why a trinity of gods, or a triune god, rather than a duad or a quaternity of gods, or a duo-une or quadrune god? Certainly there is

[1] See *Books on Egypt and Chaldea*, vol. iv. 1899, by Budge and King, of the British Museum.

nothing peculiar in the number three to distinguish it from the other numerals. A triangle is no more remarkable as a geometrical figure than a square or a pentagon. Why, then, should three have become the sacred number of deity? The question might here be raised whether after all trinity was so eminent in the Ethnic religions, whether in fact too much has not been made of the triads that have been found. It is true that the Ethnic polytheism allowed a considerable latitude to its trinitarianism. There were changes from one triad of gods to another, also duplicates of triads, and in the Egyptian religion there are counted eleven triads. Professor Rawlinson finds a quaternity of gods in some districts. But these exceptional cases only prove and emphasize the rule, and Bishop Westcott's avowal in his book on "The Symbolism of Numbers" is substantially true: "It is impossible to study any system of worship throughout the world without being struck with the peculiar persistence of the triple number in regard to Divinity." Three, then, was somehow held among the early races of mankind to be a peculiarly sacred number, and as such especially appropriate to deity.

That certain numbers have peculiar sacredness was a very early tradition. Such were seven, ten, as well as three. It was an ancient idea that numbers had a deep and fundamental significance. Pythagoras, the most famous and venerated name in early Greek philosophy, built his whole system

of the origin of the universe on numbers, finding in them the first principles of order and beauty and law. The peculiar sacredness of *seven* was emphasized in Hebrew tradition and especially recognized by the Mosaic laws, but was by no means limited to that people. Christianity accepted the Old Testament idea, and the Roman Catholic Church has perpetuated it in its seven sacraments, seven mortal sins, etc. It was a Pythagorean idea that *odd* numbers are more propitious than *even* numbers, and this superstition has taken deep hold on men. The elder Pliny declares: "Odd numbers have more power than even ones." Virgil, in one of his Eclogues, sings: "God takes delight in odd numbers." The Romans were very superstitious about unlucky even days of the months. How far this explains the early sacredness attached to *three* cannot be known. But Plutarch tells us that "The Romans were very careful in their curses to repeat them *three times*, — three being with them a mystic number."

There is a remarkable passage in Aristotle ("De Cœlo," i. 1) in which he distinguishes line, plane, and body as having magnitude in one, two, and three directions. "Since body has magnitude in *three* directions, it has magnitude in *all* directions: hence three equals all, or is the complete or perfect number." He quotes the Pythagoreans to the effect that everything is marked off by threes: "The end, the middle, and the beginning have

the number of the whole and are a triad." Hence he adds: "Therefore, having received from nature as it were laws of it (*i. e.* the triad), we also employ this number (three) for the holy rites of the gods. Moreover, we apply predicates of common terms in the same manner. For we call the term 'two,' or 'the two,' 'both,' but we do not style them 'all.' But concerning 'the three,' we first use this expression (all), and these forms of language, as has been said, we follow *because nature herself thus leads the way.*" This curious passage plainly indicates that Aristotle found or thought he found the number three to contain a unique feature or principle of nature. The universe, he conceived, is based on the principle of "the triad." It is interesting to note how Aristotle connected the laws of nature with those of religion and the gods. The rites of religion in his day had apparently some trinitarian features which he regarded as somehow connected with the trinitarian character of nature itself. Aristotle does not pursue this point farther, but plainly he started a line of speculative thought which would have logically led him to a trinitarian conception of God himself. There is no trinitarian element in Aristotle's philosophy, except so far as it may be drawn from the general principles of Platonism, which he accepted; where, as we shall see farther on, a trinitarian principle lurks. But plainly Aristotle must have been struck with the evidences which nature seemed to afford of a triadal character in the con-

stitution of things. Too much, indeed, should not be made of this passage, which occurs, not in a philosophical work, but in a treatise of physics.

Aristotle, on the whole, cannot be counted as in any sense a religious trinitarian. He held to the unity of God, whether theistically or pantheistically is not quite clear. His testimony, therefore, is the more remarkable, and helps us to understand how the ancient world should have singled out *three* as a number of peculiar sacredness. The indications of a natural and divine constitution which Aristotle discerned in the triple characteristics of external things may also be found in the human soul and in its laws of thought and reasoning. Psychology finds a tripartite division clearly distinguishable in the soul. The functions of the intellect, the sensibilities, and the will are quite diverse. Yet the soul is one, with a single self-consciousness. So, also, the logical reason works in a threefold way. All thought in its development involves thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The Aristotelian syllogism, which expresses the law of all logical mental processes, consists of three parts : the major premise, the minor premise, and the conclusion. Augustine made use of such analogies drawn from the composite nature of the soul and its activities in his work on the Trinity. These tripartite distinctions which he finds in the faculties of man are not of a very scientific character, but they show that Aristotle's idea of a triad as a part of the constitution of nature and as somehow symbol-

izing the divine existence was a fertile thought, and found reception in other minds. A considerable portion of Augustine's treatise is devoted to the comparison of God as existing in trinity and man as having a trinity of faculties and modes of thought and action.

The same line of defense of the mysterious, if not contradictory, character of God, as triune or tri-personal, has been adopted by many later theologians. The position has been taken that in the very nature of things God must exist in trinity, and that such a trinitarian mode of existence is essential to the full expression of the moral and personal life of God. The point to be noted is that it is an argument for the dogma of the trinity drawn from the triune distinctions found in nature and in man. One form of this argument is seen in the so-called "social trinity" recently set forth by Shedd, Fairbairn, and others, — a view which seems to have a singular popularity. It seems to be assumed that a person must be put into social relations with some other person or persons in order to the exercise of self-consciousness, and as before creation God was alone he must have had an interior triple personality as the basis of conscious existence. This theory is simply another speculative effort to explain and defend the threeness of God; but it is psychologically unsound. Self-consciousness, which is the condition of personality, does not require the actual existence of any individual non-ego in order to its activity.

The Ego postulates its own subjective non-ego by a psychological necessity. It is the mystery of personality that the subject of it is self-conscious, that is, has self-communion. God as a person is a *social unit*, and needs no trinity of persons in order to the exercise of his social nature. Man certainly is not a "social trinity," yet the first man Adam seems to have been very sociable with himself before Eve was created to be a helpmeet to him. When Robinson Crusoe, in the realistic story of De Foe, was cast on a desert island without human companionship, was it necessary that his nature should be trinitarianized in order to the continued exercise of his social, moral instincts? The simple suggestion of it carries on its face its utter absurdity. What makes the story so true to life is the natural way in which Robinson lives alone, keeps a diary of his long solitude, and tells us how he sighed and wept over his lonely lot. Did it ever occur to any one that Crusoe was in danger of losing his mind or capacity of self-consciousness during those twelve years of complete isolation? Rather, in fact, were not his faculties of personality quickened into more vigorous activity by his lonely experience? Such, certainly, is the impression made by the story, — a story so artfully told that it has all the verisimilitude of a historical autobiography. And must we regard the Divine personality as deficient in those qualities of persistent self-consciousness which are so plainly inherent in human persons?

Of all the metaphysical or logical theories that have originated in the effort to make rational and comprehensible to faith the traditional dogma of the Christian trinity as three persons in one God, this one of a *social trinity*, though it has the prestige of many distinguished advocates, is the most illogical and fatuous. As an explanation of the divine tri-unity, it is a more concrete form of the metaphysical conception of trinity as involved in thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, but it is equally fallacious. Dr. Schaff confesses that the distinction of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis gives only a Sabellian trinity, and a "social trinity" is not tri-personal, for God's self-consciousness is uni-personal, as is that of every moral being. I refer to these examples of later theorizing on the question of the necessity of a trinity in God as showing how easily speculative thought may take this direction, since natural analogies seem to favor it.

But whatever view be taken of such speculative arguments for a trinity in God, from psychological, logical, or social analogies, there is no evidence that they ever arose in ancient times. They belong to a highly reflective and philosophical age. I am even inclined to doubt whether the Ethnic trinities owe their origin and growth in any way to such refinements of thought as are connected with attaching a sacred and mystical character to numbers. The Pythagorean doctrine that numbers form the substance of things is an after-

thought of a quite fully developed civilization. The Ethnic trinities were a spontaneous evolution of the mythopœic imagination of uncivilized man, rather than a product of the speculative reason, and their real causes must be sought in other directions.

Recent anthropological investigations have brought out into full light the fact that the *family* based on the union of the sexes is the original foundation of human society. Such is the picture given of the beginnings of social order in Genesis, and it accords with the latest results of historical criticism. The most conspicuous and potent principle of all life in the view of early man was *generation.* This required the masculine and feminine elements — the two uniting to produce a third, namely, a son. Father, mother, son, — these form the social trinity that lies behind all human life and society. But this early interpretation of things did not stop there. Generation was made equally the cause of the foundation of the world. All the early cosmogonies and cosmologies are built on this theory. Two original principles — as, for example, the Heaven and Earth of Hesiod, which are personified as male and female, or, in the Chaldæo-Babylonian religion, Ea, the god of water, and Damkina, his wife, goddess of earth — unite to produce through successive generations the world. It is but a step further to introduce a triad of gods as the generative source not only of the world and man, but also of all the gods of

polytheism. And in fact this generative idea, with its triad of Father, Mother, and Son, gives us the keynote of the Ethnic trinities. Professor Sayce, in his "Hibbert Lectures," declares: "The only genuine trinity that can be discovered in the religious faith of early Chaldæa was that old Accadian system which conceived of a divine father and mother by the side of their son, the sun god;" and he further adds: "The keystone of Semitic belief was the generative character of the deity. A language which divided nouns into masculine and feminine found it difficult to conceive of a deity which was not masculine and feminine too. The divine hierarchy was necessarily regarded as a family, at the head of which stood 'father Bel.'" The study of the other Ethnic religions discloses the same fact. With many variations of form the generative triad is the principle that binds all these religions together and gives us one key to the explanation of their trinitarian character. Here is the explanation of the origin of the term father — so frequent a name of the first and highest god in all the Ethnic religions. The traditional idea that the fatherhood of God is a part of the new revelation of the Christian gospel is a historical error. It pervades the Ethnic religions, and lies at the foundations of the Ethnic trinities. Homer's title of Zeus, "father of gods and men," was a part of the religious inheritance of the Aryan race; and behind the Hebrew Semitic belief in Jehovah as the creator and father of

mankind was the earlier Chaldæo-Babylonian faith in "the sovereign father Ea." Plato showed his religious conservatism in calling the creator of the world and man, in his "Timæus," "the great father of the gods." Even Plotinus, pantheist as he was, continually styles his first hypostasis, τὸ ἕν, "Father," paying so much of deference to tradition. When Jesus of Nazareth taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven," he was only following, though with new insight and clearer apprehension, the well-nigh universal religious consciousness of the race.

The feminine element, which was fundamental in the generative theory, kept its place and function in the Ethnic trinities. The first and second members of a triad are usually husband and wife, thus preparing the way for the son, or third person, who often becomes the chief object of faith and worship, for a reason which will soon appear. The prominence of the female goddess is marked in all the ancient religions. In the Homeric Olympus, Here and Athene are closely connected with Zeus in power and function. So in the Roman religion, Juno and Minerva form with Jupiter the Capitoline triad. In the Egyptian trinity of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, Isis, the wife and mother, was the most popular member, and Isis temples and rites became the fashion at Rome in the Imperial times. Ashtaroth, whose name appears in the Old Testament, was, under the name of Istar, a member of the Babylonian triad, and

had a Chaldæan origin. It is to be said, however, that the feminine element is less prominent in later Ethnic trinities, and in the latest and most fully developed examples, namely, the Hindoo and Plotinian, it quite disappears, and a masculine member takes its place. But while the aspects of wife and mother faded out of view in many of the Ethnic trinities, the aspect of son, as the third member of the triad, grew continually in importance and conspicuousness, — supplanting often the first god or father in popular favor and worship. Thus Marduk, the great god of the Babylonians, is a god-son of "the sovereign father Ea." Among his titles are "first-born son," "only begotten," "holy son."

The *naturalistic* character of the Ethnic trinities here comes into distinct view. Among the earliest, most remarkable, and widespread forms of human worship was that of the sun or sun-god. Traces of it are found in almost every known religion, and its popularity grew from age to age. Never was it greater than in the latest Græco-Roman times. Constantine, before his conversion to Christianity, was a devoted worshiper of Helios or Apollo, the sun-god, and Julian his nephew, the last pagan emperor, made sun worship the centre of his New Platonic religion. Thus, in the Greek world Father Zeus had given place in popular belief to his son, the sun-god Apollo. The same was true in the Egyptian world, where the sun-god Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris,

became the popular divinity. It is interesting to note how easily the third member of the Ethnic triad, the son, became metamorphosed into the sun-god. The Babylonian Marduk was the sun-god, like the Greek Apollo and the Egyptian Horus, and thus the deep hold of sun worship on men was transferred to the son of the generative triad and increased his greatness and power. So that it may be said that when Christianity began to spread in the world, its most powerful competitor and rival was that member of the Ethnic triads which represented the product of the generative principle and which also represented the latest relic of the primeval nature worship, the sun-god, the god of light, heat, life, and blessing to the world.

But there is another distinct line of causation that played its part in the Ethnic trinitarian development. The earliest religious attitude of men toward the powers of nature, which they mythologized into supernatural divine beings, was one of fear and supplication. But how could they reach the ears of the sovereign Father of the gods, who dwelt in the highest heavens? The need of a mediating and intercessory being between man and God — a point which Plato made so central in his dualistic philosophy, and which was borrowed from Platonism and developed more fully by Philo, Paul, the author of the Fourth Gospel, and finally by Plotinus in New Platonism — has been echoed by all human souls from the beginning of time.

Ancient philosophy was largely employed in the effort to explain how the deity is related to the world and man, and how the bridge between them can be crossed, and a basis be established for human prayer and worship and communion. Plato's mediation doctrine, which has so deeply affected all later thought, was anticipated in the Ethnic trinities. Here came in the special function of the son, the third member of the triad, or second member, as he sometimes became. Merodach, the Babylonian sun-god, "the son of Ea, the first-born of the gods," was "intercessor between god and man," "interpreter of the will of his father Ea," "the redeemer." So Agni, one of the most remarkable and popular of the ancient deities of India, — himself triune, also a member of a trinity, namely, Dyaus, Indra, Agni, — a son of Indra, is described in the Vedic hymns as "the best friend of man among the gods," as "not far off," as "house priest and friend," "chief sacrificial priest," "messenger," "a link between earth and heaven," "man's guest." In a hymn to Agni it is said: "May he bring the gods here to us." "As a father to his son be easy of access to us." It was these mediating deities, who were brought by their functions into nearer and closer relations with man, that became the great objects of popular veneration and worship.

It is to be noticed in this connection that the mediative idea by itself requires but two divine beings, not a trinity. But even the mediating god,

the son of the father, might easily be regarded as still so distant as to need another mediating being to fill, in some further measure, the void. It was thus that Platonism introduced the doctrine of subordinate gods or dæmons to fill the middle stage between God and man. So we find in one of the Babylonian trinities Merodach raised to the second place in the triad, and a second mediator introduced as the third member. This helps us to understand the later growth and greater indefiniteness of development of the third member of several Ethnic trinities. The same fact occurs in the history of the Christian trinity, and will be noticed later.

If we compare the generative idea with that of mediation as causes producing the Ethnic trinities, both are found united in many of them, and that very early in their history. In fact, the two ideas run naturally together and form parts of one general view. Sonship and mediatorship are closely affiliated. Who can so well represent the father of our race as his own son? Christianity laid hold of this natural affiliation in its doctrine that God sent his only begotten Son into the world to be his messenger of love and mercy and to be a mediator between him and his human creatures.

In considering the causes that have contributed to the production of the Ethnic trinities we might stop at this point, for we think the two great causes have been brought to light. Generation as the original force in the formation of the world

of gods and men, and mediatorship as the great principle by which all moral beings are brought into relations of amity and fellowship with God, — these afford a satisfactory historical explanation of the Ethnic trinities, and we need look no farther. But the survey is not quite complete without considering a point or two more. We have seen that in the Ethnic religions there was a historical evolution from multiplicity to unity. In this movement the Ethnic trinities were a sort of half-way house, and it was natural that some of them should stop there, while others moved on to dualism, and others still to monism. It may be even said of several Ethnic religions that they are polytheistic, trinitarian, dualistic, and monistic. This is especially true of the Persian Zoroastrianism, one of the purest and noblest of them all, anticipating in many of its doctrines those of Christianity. The Ethnic trinities were also a natural stage in the pantheistic counter-evolution from unity to multiplicity, which was an outgrowth of philosophic thought, and is illustrated in Hindooism and Plotinian New Platonism. Hindooism, starting from unity in Brahm, proceeds to the *trimurti*, Brahma, Vishnu, and Civa, and thence on down through the whole pantheon of divine beings to man and the lowest forms of existence. So Plotinus made his starting-point a pure abstraction, τὸ ἕν (the one), out of which he drew his "three hypostases," which became the fountain-head of an evolution that embraced all things. It

is a curious fact that the most recent effort of Christian trinitarian theologians to set forth the triple nature of God, as most completely satisfying the speculative reason in its efforts to harmonize the conflicting categories of unity and multiplicity, or of sameness and difference, is precisely that which marks the philosophic trinitarianism of the Ethnic religions. Surely speculative philosophies in their attempts to solve the mysteries of the universe often find themselves in strange company, and the moral is that some mysteries which must be accepted as facts can never be satisfactorily explained. It is the old story, so continually rehearsed, of the captive bird uselessly chafing its wings against the network of the cage that holds it with a relentless grasp. The common pantheistic tendency that lurks in all these vain attempts is strikingly apparent.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL CHARACTER AND RELATIONS OF THE ETHNIC TRINITIES

We pass now from the *causes* that united to develop the Ethnic trinities to a more direct consideration of *their interior characteristics*. The facts at the basis of such a consideration cover so vast a field that it is impossible to attempt anything more than a cursory survey. It is essential, however, to any adequate comparison of the Ethnic trinities with the Christian trinitarian dogma, such as is proposed, that this part of the subject should be carefully examined, and, after a summary general statement, I shall give a more minute account of several of the Ethnic trinities that were more highly developed, and that present interesting points of comparison to the Christian trinity.

A comparative examination of the Ethnic trinities reveals many points of clear resemblance and also considerable variety of form and development. The resemblances suggest the question whether they do not all spring from a common root. That there was such a common root in the form of a primitive revelation to the first parents of the race has been the traditional view of Christian theologians; but it is completely overthrown by the

whole trend of historical investigation. The very differences, which are quite radical and appear in the earliest historical times, indicate diverse and independent origins. The old unscientific theory of an original unity of the race, with a single ancestral abode, language, and religion, is contradicted by the plainest historical facts. Such unity is the still far-off goal of human civilization and progress, — still a political, ecclesiastical, and philosophical ideal, not a fact of man's beginnings. The pre-Adamite, pre-historical men were essentially savages. Gradually populating and spreading over the vast wilds of the earth, they roved in small clans whither they would, until the nomadic state gave place to the agricultural and stationary. Meanwhile diverse languages, customs, traditions, ideas, modes of social and political life, grew up everywhere. Such a thing as a general widespread social order was utterly unknown. Small tribes lived in isolation or in frequent war, resisting all intrusions from without. It was in such a condition of human life that the different Ethnic religions and trinities had their earliest beginnings. To explain them by intercommunication and borrowing of religious ideas is impossible, for they are found at the same time in all parts of the world, in Asia, Africa, Europe, America, and the islands of the Pacific. There is only one rational way to account for them. They are the result of the common religious instincts and needs of human nature. At first sight it seems strange that so many

independent trinitarian religions should have arisen spontaneously among men. But the study we have already made of the causes that worked toward their formation goes far to solve the mystery. These causes deal mainly with facts, laws, conditions, needs, aspirations, of a universal character. In truth, the prevalence of divine triads in the religions of the world is to be explained in the same general way as the wide prevalence of sacrificial cults, of idolatrous worship, of rites such as circumcision and baptism, of calendars of holy and secular days, and especially of a seventh day of peculiar sacredness. All these ideas, customs, rites, institutions, are a natural and spontaneous outgrowth of the common conditions and yearnings of man's religious nature. They are not peculiar to any one people or class of peoples, but are the common inheritance of the race. The same is true of a doctrine of God. The religious instincts of man cry out for "God, the living God," and everywhere throughout the world, even among the most degraded tribes, some conception of God has taken shape in some form of religious faith and worship. The Ethnic trinities are simply developments of such religious impulses and cravings. Man creates God in his own image. He sees the generative force operative in all nature, and he builds a theogony of deity in which Fatherhood and Motherhood and Sonship play their parts. He looks upon God as far distant in the heavens, dwelling in sun, moon, and stars, and, fearing his

power, he builds a triad in which a son-mediator may be a daysman between him and his Maker. He sees or fancies he sees a triple character or principle at work in the world, and so he invests the number three with a peculiar sacredness and reduces his divine pantheon to a trinity of beings that somehow represents or includes the whole.

But while common religious instincts and wants produced a common trinitarianism among numerous separated tribes and nations, there are wide divergences among them in the strictness and completeness of the trinitarian development. In some of them it is loosely and hesitatingly set forth, in others much more rigidly and definitely. This usually depends upon the degree of intellectual and philosophical advancement of the people. The French archæologist, A. Bertrand, in his recent most instructive work, "La Réligion des Gaulois," proves beyond question from archæological discoveries the existence of triads and trinitarian ideas among the Gauls; but such ideas assumed the crudest and most illusive shapes, as, for instance, in the tricephalous or three-faced heads of divinities found on altars and vases. On the other hand, among the more highly civilized Chaldæans, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Egyptians, triads of gods were a common and notable feature of their theogonies. It is, however, among the three most philosophically cultured peoples of the ancient world that the most highly developed trinities are found, namely, the Hindoos, the Persians, and the

Greeks. The Zoroastrian, the Brahmanistic, and New Platonic trinities are not only quite fully developed along the line of the trinitarian evolution, but form component parts of highly elaborated philosophical systems, reminding one of the subtle theological speculations of the Nicene age on which were built the wonderful metaphysical superstructure of the *homoousian* trinity.

Akin to this class of facts is the noticeable ease with which the Ethnic trinities are modified or readjusted to meet new circumstances or influences, while still preserving their trinitarian character. The names and offices of the three members of the triad are subject to change. The earlier Accadian trinity becomes reorganized among the Babylonians, and the Babylonian trinity in turn is amended by the Assyrians. Egypt had numerous local trinitarian cults. There was one triad at Memphis, another at Thebes, another at Abydos, and almost every district had its local triad. Even in the same locality a triad had a fluxive character, at least so far as names and functions were concerned. The number three itself was sometimes invaded or its significance extended. In some Egyptian localities a fourth god was added, though usually of a subordinate character. It was also the case in Egypt especially, where the trinitarian element was wholly subject to the universal polytheism, that there should be triple combinations of triads, and even a further triplicity. The family or generative idea that was so fundamental to

almost all the Ethnic trinities also tended to give elasticity to the triads. Each of the gods in the Babylonian triad had his wife, and wives were common in many Ethnic trinities, thus in a sense duplicating the number, though it is doubtful whether the wives were thought of as separate from their male companions. These peculiarities of the Ethnic trinities are of course to be explained by the common polytheism that underlies them all, though this polytheistic feature is less obtrusive in some cases than in others. As we have seen, a triad of gods is a natural stage in any polytheistic or monotheistic evolution. What is remarkable is that, in any thoroughly polytheistic form of religion, the idea of a trinity should have had such prominence or persistency. It helps one to realize how deep must have been the impression made on the ancient world by those phenomena of nature and of man that led them to place generation and mediatorship at the very basis of their religious ideas of God and of his relations with themselves.

CHAPTER IV

THE HINDOO BRAHMANIC TRINITY

From this general survey I pass to a particular description of the three great representatives of the Ethnic trinities, namely, the Hindoo, the Zoroastrian, and the Greek. This chapter will be devoted to the Hindoo.

The Hindoo religion appears in the Vedas in full polytheistic form, as a deification of the phenomena and powers of nature. There were three classes of divinities, the gods of the sky, of the lower atmosphere, and of the earth. The earliest worship made the sky gods most prominent, but the tendency was towards the prominence of the lower divinities, since they were supposed to be in closer relations with men. Thus the earlier sky gods give way to the atmospheric gods, and they in turn to the earth gods. Varuna is supplanted by Indra, and Indra in turn by Agni, who becomes the central deity of the whole Hindoo polytheistic pantheon, — a triune god, "the first trial-ity," comprehending in himself the threefold unity, typical of earth, atmosphere, and heaven. Here already the pantheistic strain begins to appear, which finally in later Hindoo philosophy triumphs completely over the earlier polytheism. Of Agni

it is said, "in him are all the gods." It is this peculiar character of earth god, including also the higher orders of divinities, that invests him with the mediatorial functions of which I have already spoken. This triune feature of Agni is described in language that reminds one forcibly of modern Sabellian expressions concerning the Christian trinity. "Threefold is my light." "He is all threefold, three are his tongues, his births, his places of sojourn, thrice led about the sacrifice given thrice a day." Meanwhile the trinitarian idea is emerging already in the Vedic period, fluctuating, however, in the names of the triad as the tendency of popular thought and worship passes from the higher to the lower gods, until it takes a more pronounced shape in Dyaus, Indra, and Agni, which may be called the Vedic trinity, as compared with the later Brahmanic trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Civa. This Vedic trinity illustrates the tendency from the primitive subordination of the lower deities to their equality with the higher and to the practical substitution of the third member for the first and second in the popular faith and worship. It is Agni, the third member of the Vedic trinity, who is creator of the world, and high-priest and mediator and guest and friend of man. This feature of Hindooism is the historical precursor of a similar development in the history of the Christian trinitarian dogma, where the earlier subordination element in the case of the second and third persons is at length wholly obliterated by

Augustine and the Western Church, and a complete equality is established. The pantheistic element which is to be noted in the triune character of Agni grows more and more pronounced in later Vedic times. There is a tendency to a unification of divinities, which prepares the way for the complete pantheism of the Brahmanic period. The language of the priests and philosophers reminds us of the Stoic writers by whom the old gods are still honored with the lips, and the polytheistic language is retained, but whose figurative or allegorical method of interpretation reduces it all to the baldest pantheism. It is at this point that the idea of the God-Father rises into notice, in a way that is suggestive of Platonism, especially in its New Platonic form.

The next stage in the evolution of Hindooism is Buddhism, — one of the most remarkable movements in the world's religious history. Gautama or Buddha, "the enlightened," as he came to be called, was not a radical reformer of the Vedic faith, but a saint, or earnest seeker after personal salvation. He opened a new "way" to heaven. While Brahmanism sought the heavenly life through knowledge or asceticism, Gautama sought it by purity and love. Philosophically he was an agnostic, but Buddhism as a religion became atheistic, acknowledging neither god nor personal immortality. Gautama resembled Jesus in this, that he was not a dogmatist but a moral teacher. The similarity between the teachings of Buddha and

those of Christ is certainly striking. He proclaimed a free gospel for all men, declaring against all castes or priesthoods or aristocracy of knowledge. How strange in an age when the religion of the many was so radically different from that of the few to hear such words as these: "I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine, for in respect of truth, Avander, your master, has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back." If one would realize how full of reminders Buddha's teaching was of the sayings of Christ, in its whole tenor and spirit, let him read the Dhammapada, one of the canonical books of the Buddhists, which contains a collection of the reputed sayings of Buddha. How authentic this collection is it is impossible to say, but certainly it was believed to be such by Buddhists of a later generation, and it breathes a spirit of religion "pure and undefiled," as realistic as the Sermon on the Mount or the parable of the sower. The "kingdom of God" for Buddha, like Christ's, was "within." Righteousness was not a matter of outward works, or ceremonies, but of inward character. Let me give a few selections from Buddha's sayings in illustration: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him." "Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love: this is an old rule."

"If a man conquer himself he is the greatest of conquerors." "Bad deeds and deeds hurtful to ourselves are easy to do; what is beneficial and good, that is very difficult to do." "Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome evil by good." "Speak the truth, do not yield to anger, give if thou art asked for little, and by these three steps thou wilt go near the gods." "The best of men is he who has eyes to see." "As a solid rock is not shaken by the wind, wise people falter not amidst blame and praise." "First of all let a man establish himself in the good, then only can he instruct others." "He who is permeated by goodness, let him turn to the land of peace, where transientness finds an end, to happiness." "A rest like that of the deep sea, calm and clear, the wise find who hear the truth." Surely, if these passages were incorporated bodily in Christ's Sermon on the Mount, there would be no moral jar, rather a complete rhythmic spiritual harmony. We shall not be surprised now to find that Buddha taught a gospel that was for all mankind. "The Exalted One appears in the world for salvation, for joy to many people, out of compassion for the world, for the blessing, the salvation, the joy of gods and men."

No authentic biography of Buddha has come down to us. The earliest accounts were sayings or *logia* placed in a historical setting of narrative to explain the occasion of what was said, very much as the Memorabilia of Socrates by Xeno-

phon were constructed, or the Synoptic gospels. The later lives, which bear so close a likeness in many ways to the gospel accounts of Christ, are wholly legendary. One of the most remarkable of these legends is that of Buddha's temptation by Mara the Evil One. The earliest form of the tradition was that Buddha, before setting out on his public career, fasted for twenty-eight days. The temptation was a later addition. Of course the marvelous similarity of the account to that given in the gospels of Christ's fasting and temptation by the devil strikes every reader. Oldenberg well says on this point: "It seems scarcely necessary to observe that in both cases the same obvious motives have given rise to the corresponding narrative; the notion of an influence exerted by Buddhist traditions on Christian cannot be entertained." Neither can the opposite idea of a counter influence be considered; for the Buddhist tradition is certainly the earlier. Such legendary accounts began to gather around the life of Buddha not many years after his death. Buddha himself became deified and finally was made the supreme deity, incarnating himself from time to time in one and another human being. His birth was also made miraculous, involving a divine as well as human element.

Buddhism finally became a sort of exile from India, but its leaven remained, and later trinitarian Hindooism introduced Buddha into its pantheon as one of the incarnations of Vishnu. This brings

us to the last stage of the development of Hindooism, the great sectarian trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Civa.

The Hindoo *trimurti* grew out of the Brahmanic pantheism, which was itself based on Vedic polytheism with its *triads*. Brahma became the absolute god of pantheistic Brahmanism, while the old Vedic divinities were retained as forms or creations of Brahma. The Maha-bharata, one of the two great Indian epics, gives us the intermediate stage between Brahmanism and the more completely developed Hindooism of later times. In this epic the pantheistic character of the trinity is clearly visible. There is one absolute form of deity, namely, Brahma or Brahm, but he appears in three personal manifestations, Vishnu, Civa, Brahma, "one form, three gods." Everywhere the real identity of the three gods is implied. Krishna, the hero of the epic, who is represented as an incarnation of Vishnu, declares himself to be "the supreme being, having no beginning," "the productive cause of the entire universe, and also its destroyer," "the beginning, the middle, and the end of beings," thus identifying himself with Brahma and Civa as well as with Vishnu, and uniting in himself the functions of all three. But this strongly pantheistic reaction was followed by an evolution towards a more systematized trinitarianism, in which the distinctly personal character of the members of the trinity is emphasized. The earlier epical definition of deity as "one form,

three gods" is inverted into "three gods, one form." Such is the fully developed Hindoo *trimurti*. But it must not be supposed that the sectarian trinity of later Puranic Hindooism is any less pantheistic in fact than the older trinity of the Epic, or of the Brahmanical books. The question among the sects came to be which person of the three is the true Brahma. This is the peculiarity of the sectarian orthodoxy of later Hindooism. Under cover of it different sects could unite, — each calling itself trinitarian, but claiming that the trinity of Vishnu, Civa, and Brahma was really contained in one or other of the three. This pantheistic trinitarianism "was eventually represented under the symbol of a body with three heads" — a mode of setting forth triunity which was anticipated by the Celtic Gauls in their crude altars and tombs called *tricephales*.

Such in brief is the history of the evolution of the Hindoo *trimurti*. Several points are noticeable as we study its internal character. First, it was a direct historical development of Vedic religious thought, and is rooted in polytheistic, and not in monotheistic ideas, thus representing a stage from multiplicity to unity — in this respect differing from the Christian trinitarian evolution, which moved from unity to multiplicity, and agreeing with all the Ethnic trinities. Secondly, the Hindoo *trimurti* represents a movement on philosophical lines towards a pantheistic, not a monotheistic unity. It is impossible, within the limits

of this survey, to follow all the successive stages of development. The old Vedic triads gradually gave way to new ones, and to a more complete polytheism, with a dim background of monotheism. This principle of unity became a subject of philosophic study, and in Brahmanism took a completely pantheistic form. Brahm was at first the term for mere eternal absolute existence. This impersonal form of deity subsequently became personalized in Brahma, the masculine of Brahm, and formed the First Person of the Hindoo trinity. Brahma was the Creator and Father of all things. As the Vedic religion starts with physical phenomena and its gods are personifications of natural forces, so the Hindoo philosophical trinity followed the same materialistic lines. All phenomena involve three laws or conditions of existence, generation or creation, preservation, destruction and reproduction, and these forces are in constant operation through succession and interaction. The Hindoo triad laid hold of these trinitarian aspects of nature. To Brahma, the Creator, was added Vishnu, one of the oldest Vedic sun gods, who was raised to a higher rank as the second person of the triad, the preserver. Then Civa, also an ancient divinity, under the form of the fire god, Rudra, became the third person, as the destroyer and regenerator. Originally these three gods were not regarded as forming three absolute independent Beings, but as created and dependent, while on an equality with each other, being com-

mon emanations from the Absolute One, thus indicating their polytheistic background. But as the evolution moved on the relation of the three became more pronounced and close. The underlying pantheism of all Indian philosophy became the uniting element in the new Hindoo triad. Brahma, Vishnu, and Civa ceased to be equal gods or forms of one god, and became a trinity in co-relation and subordination, though the pantheistic element still ruled it and merged the three together in one common divine existence. As this more complete trinitarian form became developed, the relations of the three members of the triad were changed, and also the order of subordination. In the Purana period Vishnu is the highest and supreme god, Civa is second, unless treated as a rival of Vishnu, while Brahma, who originally was first in rank and authority, falls to the third place, — a process which we shall see again and again occurring in the history of the Ethnic trinities, and which forms a curious chapter in the evolution of the Christian trinitarianism. In the final stage of Hindoo trinitarian development its pantheism is complete. For the Vishnuite Vishnu is the absolute god, and the other two members of the triad are merely forms or names of Vishnu. The same is true of Civa for the Civaite. In other words, Hindoo trinitarianism becomes sectarian, and it is such a sectarian trinity within whose pantheistic folds the two great Hindoo sects have managed to live together down to the present day.

But, thirdly, the most remarkable chapter in the evolution of the Hindoo *trimurti* is the incarnation of Vishnu in the form of Krishna, the god-man. The idea of a divine incarnation was not new in Indian thought. It is a fundamental element of all mythologies. Gods are continually appearing as human beings, assuming the form of a man or woman, or even for the time personating some actual man or woman, as, in the Odyssey, Athene assumed the form of Mentor, and went with Telemachus as his companion to the court of Nestor. The theory of transmigration which is so embedded in Indian thought has a clear affinity with that of incarnation. The lines between the brute, the human, and the divine worlds, between the natural and the supernatural, were not sharply drawn in those early unscientific times, as they are to-day. There was nothing extraordinary to the Indian thinker any more than to the Greek, in the descent of the gods to companionship with men, and in the assumption of human guise. Hebrew thought shows traces in the Old Testament of the same anthropomorphizing tendency. Abraham is represented as entertaining divine beings, who appeared as men and ate at his table. But the Vishnu-Krishna incarnation doctrine has one peculiarity. It was not a temporary manifestation of a god to men in a human form. It was a permanent incarnation of the Absolute Deity in a divine man, who was born, and lived, and died like other men. These incarnations of Vishnu were

indeed repeated according to human needs, but each incarnation was a true birth into a true human nature. Krishna thus describes it in the Bhagavat-Gita, or "Divine Song," to his friend Arjuna: "Many births of mine have passed away, O Arjuna, but thou hast not known them. Though I am unborn and of essence that knoweth no deterioration, though I am the lord of creatures, still, relying on my own nature, I take birth by my own powers of illusion. Whensoever loss of piety occurreth and the rise of wickedness, then do I create myself. *For the protection of the righteous, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of establishing piety, I am born age after age.*" The Maha-bharata, or "Great Epic," represents Krishna as "born of a woman," living an active human life among men, and finally as suffering death like any other mortal. Yet in the "Divine Song," which is included in the "Great Epic," Krishna again and again speaks in the person of Vishnu, describing himself as the "Supreme Being." And Arjuna replying, after having been allowed a vision of Vishnu in his divine glory, addresses him, "I bow to thee, O chief of the gods; be gracious unto me. I desire to know thee that art the primeval one." These passages surely remind one of the Christian doctrine, and irresistibly force on the Christian historical student the question whether the Hindoo Vishnu-Krishna incarnation doctrine is not borrowed from Christianity itself. Some Christian scholars have

held to this view, but all recent investigations have tended more and more strongly to the opposite side, and to my mind there can be no historical doubt as to the main lines of fact. Interpolation has played a part in all ancient and mediæval literature. This is especially true of the so-called sacred books of the world. The more sacred the writing, the stronger the temptation to make additions in the form of new matter, or of new interpretation of the old. The Indian sacred books are not exceptional. The "Great Epic" is, like the Old Testament as it now appears in Jewish literature, the result of many recensions involving growth and enlargement. It is a vast compound of myth, legend, history, philosophy, and poetry, gathered around the golden age of Hindoo tradition. Whether it contains any real historical matter is doubtful. Like Homer, it is mainly a compendium of legendary traditions. These traditions extend back into the origins of Indian history, and are filled with the true Indian spirit. What may be called the first edition of the "Great Epic" as a written work may be dated certainly as early as the third or fourth century B. C., but additions continued to be made to it down to the Christian era, and afterwards on to the sixth century. Of course there were opportunities for later borrowings from the growing Christian traditions; and these borrowings can be easily discovered by plain marks of internal evidence. Some of these are drawn from the New Testament gospels, and others are copies

in spirit if not in the exact letter of the legendary apocryphal lives of Christ. But the nucleus and substance of the Vishnu-Krishna incarnation is just as surely pre-Christian and of native Indian origin as the Hindoo Triad itself. It bears the clear marks of Hindoo genius and thought. The differences between it and the Christian dogma, which are radical and essential, while the resemblances are more superficial, though startling at first sight, — a matter that will be dealt with more fully in a later chapter, — clearly indicate an independent origin. One general point of difference may be properly mentioned here, since it has to do with the radical character of the Hindoo trinitarian incarnation doctrine, as compared with all other like dogmas, whether Ethnic or Christian. The most notable and fundamental difference between the divine incarnation of Krishna and that of Jesus consists in the fact that Jesus was a real man with a veritable human life, while Krishna was a purely mythical being. On its divine supernatural side the Krishna doctrine quite agrees with the Christian, but it utterly fails on the human side. In other words, the Christian doctrine of the divine incarnation, as it was evolved in the early church, had its starting-point and centre in a historical personage, namely, Jesus of Nazareth, whereas the Indian doctrine is wholly a growth of Indian speculative thought, and has no element of historical fact to bring it into closer relation with actual human life. Thus these two

different modes of conception illustrate the two general classes of incarnation theory into which all such theories may be divided: (1) the class which starts with deity, and by an incarnation reduces deity to humanity; (2) the class which starts with a real human being and raises him to the rank of deity, and then accounts for his human nature by an incarnation of his deity. Vishnu-Krishna is an illustration of the first class. All purely mythological incarnations are of this class. According to Darmesteter, the Avestan scholar, Zoroaster was not a real historical man who was afterwards divinized by his later disciples, but a mythological creation who became incarnate in the Persian theology. If this were true, Zoroaster would belong to the same class with Vishnu-Krishna. The second class is represented by the Christ of Christian orthodoxy, the result of a historical evolution, which has been unfolded in my previous volume, "A Critical History," etc. In this case a real man was divinized, and then a doctrine of incarnation was developed to account for the presence of God in the flesh among men. The same is true of Zoroaster, if the view of West, Mills, and others, be taken, — the view which plainly best accords with the most ancient of Avestan texts, — namely, that Zoroaster is to be regarded as a Persian sage and prophet, who appeared as a reformer and founded a new religion, and was afterwards divinized into a god and worshiped. Then naturally followed the tradition

of his miraculous birth and divine incarnation. To the same class belongs Buddha in the later Buddhist religion. All efforts to turn the life of Gautama into a myth have signally failed. Idealized as that life became in the growth of tradition, so that it is difficult to separate fact from legend, the outlines of a true historical person stand out too distinctly to give any foothold for critical skepticism. The historical Buddha was a real man with a human biography, as I have already described it; but after ages developed around his life and name a series of divine Buddhas or incarnations of deity, of whom the historical Gautama, "the enlightened one," or Buddha, was one.

A clear distinction should be drawn here between all *incarnation* theories and those *mediation* ideas which we have found so characteristic of the various Ethnic trinities. All incarnation theories are based on the mediation principle, but a full mediation trinitarian doctrine does not necessarily involve the incarnation of a god into humanity, and in fact it was not included in most of the Ethnic religions, even where the mediation principle was quite fully developed, as, for example, in the Platonic philosophy. Plato introduced the mediation element into his dualistic transcendentalism. Philo developed out of Plato his Logos doctrine, and gave to the Logos the name of mediator, using the word μεσίτης which afterwards went into the Christian vocabulary. But the Greek mediation doctrine never reached any theory of

incarnation. The δαίμων of Plato and the μεσίτης of Philo always remained supernatural divine beings. Even Plotinus refused to borrow such a materialistic doctrine, as he would have termed it, from Christianity. His profoundly trinitarian mediation system was completely idealistic and speculative, and introduced no element either from mythology or history. In this respect Christianity and Hindooism including Buddhism stand apart from all other religions, and it is this fact that gives the Vishnu-Krishna doctrine such significance in the history of the Ethnic trinities. This doctrine is essentially the principle of a divine mediatorship acting between God and men, in the interest of human well-being, carried out to its completest limit. Divine condescension could go no further than to lead a god to enter the human condition and to live a real human life from birth to death, entering life and leaving it in a true human way. This is the simple meaning of the Krishna myth. It was the last and highest word of Indian religious philosophy on the mystery of the moral relation between God and man. It taught that the Absolute Deity was in closest intimacy with humanity, that human moral necessities and cravings for a moral salvation were all met and satisfied in a divine movement of God towards his creatures which involved, when the situation demanded, a real incarnation of God in the flesh, bringing him into the closest possible nearness to the objects of his love, so that they could see him somehow as he is, and

believe on him to the saving of the soul. A single passage from the "Divine Song" well illustrates the spirit of Hindooism in its purest form. Krishna thus discloses to his friend Arjuna the efficacy of faith in himself: "Fix thy heart on me alone, place thy understanding on me. Hereafter then shalt thou dwell in me. Exceedingly dear art thou to me, therefore I will declare what is for thy benefit. Forsaking all religious duties, come to me as the sole refuge; I will deliver thee from all sins." How strongly like this is to the Fourth Gospel I need not say. But, as we shall see, such sentiments are not peculiar to the "Divine Song" or the Fourth Gospel. They are the deep spiritual utterances of a common humanity, and have been repeated again and again in the history of religion. Nor is it so wonderful that this lofty speculation should have been reached by Indian sages, when we realize the conditions under which they wrought. No historical people in the world, perhaps, can be compared with the Hindoos in the region of abstract religious thought. Even Greek philosophy seems superficial and crude when put into close critical comparison with the philosophy of India. It must be remembered that recent philological science has discovered the clear bond of tribal and linguistic relationship between India and Greece, and also the clear indication that the Indian civilization and literature are much the older of the two. The Vedas were written before Homer sang, and the Brahman philosophers discussed the nature

of God and the soul before Thales developed his crude theory that all nature originated from water, or Anaxagoras suggested that behind all mixed phenomena there must be something *unmixed* and self-moved which he called the soul of things. There is good ground for believing that Pythagoras and Heracleitus owed some of their philosophical ideas to India. Not till we come in Greek thought to Plotinus and the later New Platonists do we find a development of philosophical speculation that in metaphysical acuteness and profundity rivals the sectarian schools of the Hindoo trinitarianism. The people of India have been from the earliest historical times on the whole the most intensely religious and religiously thoughtful people in the world. Their literature illustrates this. There is no history or science therein in the modern sense. It all belongs to the sphere of ethics and religion. Buddha, the consummate flower of Indian thought and life, was a religious reformer and saint, and he remains to-day one of the most striking religious figures in the calendar of the world's noblest and loftiest spirits. It is not so strange, then, that such a redemptive incarnation theory should have arisen in Indian theology.

From what has been said it is plain that the *mediation* idea rules above all others in the Hindoo trinitarianism, and culminates in the divine incarnation of Vishnu in the form of Krishna, who appears as the divine-human friend and helper of man. The precursor of this phase of doctrine,

in Indian religious tradition, as we have seen, was Agni, a member of an early Hindoo trinity, namely, Varuna, Indra, and Agni. But Agni was never incarnate as a human being. His mediatorship never reached the point of his humbling himself and submitting to a human birth and even to a human death. But this further step in the mediatorial office was natural and historically involved, and the theological movement from Agni to Vishnu-Krishna was along the lines not only of speculative logic, but of the religious intuitions. If God and man are morally related, and yet are metaphysically separated in two diverse spheres of being, the truest union between them can be brought about only by an incarnation of the higher being into the fleshly nature of the lower, and the Hindoo Brahman reached this conclusion by the same road as Athanasias, when he wrote: "God must be made man in order that man may be made God," that is, may be brought into completest spiritual unity with him. One step only remained to be taken to exhaust this whole cycle of religious thought, namely, that the subject of incarnation should be an actual historical human personage. But this was scarcely possible from the Hindoo point of view. The Vishnu-Krishna doctrine and its trinitarian accompaniment had their historical source in the Vedic polytheistic mythology. But mythology and history do not easily mix, or rather it might better be said, they mix so easily that the mythological carries the historical with it, so that

to the Hindoo thinker Krishna was as truly a historical character as Romulus was to the Roman, or Adam to the Hebrew. The myth was in their eyes as much fact as any event of history. In short, there is no need of a historical incarnation of an actual man from the mythological or ideal standpoint. Myth or legend has become history for all practical purposes. A reversal of this process must spring from the opposite quarter, namely, from a real human person who from sainthood is evolved into divinity and then is raised into a preëxistent heavenly condition to become incarnate. It is certainly remarkable that in Indian history, where a mythological and philosophic idealism so thoroughly rules, a signal illustration should be furnished of an incarnation doctrine based on a historical background. I refer to the case of Buddha and Buddhism. What makes this case the more remarkable is the fact that Buddhism is not a dogmatic revolt from earlier Vedistic or Brahmanic ideas. It is simply a chapter in the history of the Hindoo religion, — a new effort along old lines to solve the mystery of human life and salvation, a wholly ethical reform, made vital, indeed, by the holy life and character of Buddha himself. But just here is to be found the true and easy explanation of what seems at first sight so difficult of solution. The vital force of Buddhism lay in the person and personal life of its founder. The new religion gathered itself around the man Gautama. The first and easy step of religious evolution was to make

this saint among men a superhuman being, and finally an incarnation of the Absolute God. Such was the historical starting-point in the evolution of dogmatic Buddhism and its doctrine of numerous divine incarnations in men like Gautama.

It is interesting here to note that in the history of the Buddha doctrine and cult we have the only clear and complete historical counterpart to that of dogmatic Christianity. The Vishnu-Krishna doctrine, as we have seen, lacks one radical point of resemblance, in that it rests on no historical footing. But this lack is supplied by Buddhism. It is in India, then, that we find a thoroughly developed dogma of a historical incarnation of God in a real human nature, closely analogous to the Christian dogma, yet chronologically anterior by hundreds of years, so that if there was any borrowing it must have been on the Christian side. Of this, however, there is no proof, and there are differences, both in historical origin and in internal evolution and character, which stamp both as wholly distinct and independent types of that common mediation idea which is as old and universal as the human race. It is this need so deep in human nature of some mediator or mediating movement between God and man that unites all religions together, whether Ethnic or Christian, however distinguishable in other respects. Every religious faith, as a rule, rests at last on a mediating principle by which man may climb to God, be it Marduk, or Agni, or Athene, or Zoroaster, or

Mithra, or Sosiosh, or Krishna, or Buddha, or the "Word" of the Fourth Gospel, or the "ψυχή" of Plotinus.

The question might be raised whether the Jewish and Mohammedan religions are not exceptions to this rule. It is true that these two religions — both Semitic, and having the same original character, as reactions from polytheistic beliefs — agree in rejecting all distinctly trinitarian forms of divinity. The stark monotheism of these religions prevents any such tendency; but it is far from true that they lack all mediational features. Judaism made much of the mediatorship of Moses. Paul, himself a Jew, declared that the Jews received the law from God at the hands of a μεσίτης or mediator, referring to Moses. The Mosaic law itself was regarded as of divine origin and nature, and the worship therein enjoined, first in the tabernacle and afterwards in the temple, was made the medium of communication between the worshipers and Jehovah. It is true that Moses himself was never deified; but his Law, and the Temple, and the Temple cultus with the sacrificial system, became veritable mediators between the people and God. It was on the basis of their relation to the Law and the Temple that they regarded themselves as the chosen people of God, while all the heathen were disowned and cast away from his favor. The case is much the same with Mohammedanism. Mohammed only proclaimed himself a prophet like Moses, and his followers have never

treated him as more than man. Yet a principle of mediation between them and Allah was established in the view taken of the Koran, which they regard as a verbally inspired communication given to Mohammed directly from God, and so the chief means of obtaining the divine favor. The Koran has become the great Mohammedan fetich, though some account must also be made of the Caaba, or temple, at Mecca, with its legendary traditions and consequent superstitions, such as the directing of all prayer toward Mecca, as if God would hear and answer his worshipers only from that sacred spot. The *forms* of mediation in these religions certainly differ considerably from those of other religions, but the mediation principle, as a way of satisfying the religious needs of men, is found equally in them.

It was Christ, if the testimony of the Fourth Gospel may be accepted, who first promulgated in its sharpest form what may be historically called the Protestant doctrine, that no eternal mediation of any sort is required between man and his Maker, and that every human being may directly approach God and commune with him face to face, when he said: "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father," "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit," that is, not through outward mediational forms, or in any particular place, but directly anywhere and everywhere, with no bar between that needs to be re-

moved by any human or divine mediator. Christ taught the same doctrine more authentically in his parable of the prodigal son, where the erring penitent returns on his homeward way and meets his father face to face. Paul, too, had recognized, though perhaps less clearly, the same royal truth, when he declared that "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, and is not far from any one of us," "for we are also his offspring." But so spiritual a vision was not easily discoverable by men, and remained for ages the far off Holy Grail of human search and hope. None of the Ethnic religions quite reached it. Only now and then has some single solitary thinker, in some inspired moment of religious meditation, caught sight of it and left it to shine a lone star in literature. Such was Seneca when he wrote: "It is not necessary to raise the hands to heaven, nor to ask the temple keeper to admit us to the ears of a divinity, as if we could then be better heard. God is near to you, he is with you, even within you; yes, I may say that the Holy Spirit has its seat within us" (Sacer intra nos spiritus sedet. Ep. 41, ad Lucil.), — words that remind us at once of Paul's in the passage just quoted from his address on Mars Hill in Athens, and make less surprising the tradition that these two men met and afterwards had a correspondence which has come down to us. It is needless to say that the so-called "Letters of Paul and Seneca" are wholly spurious. But this fact lies behind them, namely, that man's moral con-

sciousness may anywhere and at any time so open itself to the divine incoming and presence that no vail shall remain to hide God's face, and no mediator be needed to bring him near to us. Such foregleams of truth, however, have been rare. Job is described as "a man of God;" yet he prayed: "O that I might know where I could find him." Plato was the perfect flower of Greek philosophy, yet he wrote: "God is hard to find, and when found is difficult to make known to others." Tennyson, who voiced, perhaps, beyond all others the religious aspirations and acquisitions of our modern world, was a true prophet and seer when he sang: —

> "I hold it true with him who sings
> To one clear harp in divers tones,
> That men may rise *on stepping stones*
> *Of their dead selves to higher things.*"

Such "stepping stones," indeed, are the divine revelations given in the successive stages of the history of religion, — "The world's great altar stairs that slope through darkness up to God." That vision of spiritual truth which Christ caught with such wonderful clearness, and which Paul and Seneca had glimpses of, needed for its fuller comprehension those fuller revealings of God in the wonderful discoveries in science and history of the last fifty years. Surely the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews builded better than he knew, when he wrote: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto

the fathers by the prophets," "hath provided some better thing for us, that they *without us should not be made perfect.*" How far short of the real truth, as seen in the light of later history, did this writer come? For him, plainly, the "end of days" was near at hand. Comparing the dispensation of the prophets with the messianic teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, he was fully assured that the new dispensation was ushering in the grand consummation of mundane events. How little did he realize that the gospel which Christ had proclaimed was itself only a seed which nineteen long centuries would quicken and unfold, until in another "end of days" a new epoch would be reached of higher and grander revelations, itself in turn to be succeeded "at sundry times and in divers manners" by still wider and more splendid displays of the Divine beneficence; for even "we" in these far off last times have not yet been "made perfect."

CHAPTER V

THE PERSIAN ZOROASTRIAN TRINITARIANISM

The Persian religion is closely connected with the Indian in origin and early character. These peoples not only had a common Aryan ancestry, but their historical traditions indicate a common migration from their original home, and a subsequent division into two bodies in their movement southward, from which resulted two distinct nations. In the dim prehistoric background of Zoroastrianism there are traces of a polytheism which bears plain marks of affinity with the Vedic polytheism of India. Zoroaster himself, if he was a historical and not a mythical character, as on the whole seems the best supported view, was a reformer of the ancient religion in the direction of monotheism. Zoroastrianism has usually been treated as if based on a thorough philosophical dualism, and as representing in an extreme form the dualistic theory of the origin of the universe, namely, that the present system of things, with its mixture of good and evil, is the result of the action of two original, eternal, and independent principles, one good and the author of all good, the other evil and the author of all evil. There is a single short passage in the Gathas which seems to teach this

view. But even the Gathas were not free from interpolation. Mr. L. H. Mills, the Avestan scholar, in his introduction to the Gathas, says: "We may say, *a priori*, that all existing compositions of antiquity are and must have been interpolated," — a statement which seems somewhat startling, but which all historical investigators must accept as substantially true. Mr. Mills adds that there are "less interpolations in the Gathas than is usual." The Gathas in the Avestan sacred writings correspond to the Synoptic gospels of the New Testament. Mr. Mills regards the interpolations in the Gathas as "the work of Zoroaster's earliest disciples." There was a decided tendency from the first, undoubtedly, in the Zoroastrian religion towards a dualistic doctrine, and it became fully developed in the later Zoroastrianism; but it never reached the point of extreme dualism, as was the case in Christian Gnosticism, which borrowed its dualistic principle from Zoroastrian sources, but converted it into something quite different from the doctrine of Zoroaster himself or even of his true followers. Zoroaster was a practical reformer, not a speculator, and his reform was directed mainly against polytheism, especially in the form of the worship of evil spirits. This seems to have led him to the assertion of a monotheistic doctrine. Ormuzd was the one eternal good god, surrounded by subordinate good beings. A good god cannot be responsible for the existence of evil. Such evil cannot be imputed to Ormuzd's

agency or permission. Whence, then, comes evil? The Zoroastrian treated it as connected with "the imperfection that is inherent in the nature of things." Out of this inherent imperfection sprang the kingdom of evil beings with Ahriman at their head, ever at war with Ormuzd and his kingdom of good. In this way arose the dual character of the world and of man. A dualism of this kind is consistent with a monotheistic doctrine, and is not far from the doctrine of Christ and of Paul, not to speak of the Jews after the exile, who had drawn much of their new theology from their Persian neighbors. Such a monotheistic dualism seems to have been the basis of Zoroaster's reform. When one seeks to scan more closely the details of Zoroaster's career, and to gain a clear picture of his life, the path of the historical scholar is beset at once with difficulties. If the critic's task is difficult in the case of Buddha, it is much more so in the case of Zoroaster. While I am ready on the whole to agree with Mills and West against the brilliant and trenchant criticism of Darmesteter, it must be avowed that the effort to separate even a few grains of historical truth from the mass of legendary additions is well-nigh ineffectual. But if a full picture of Zoroaster cannot be portrayed, at least the rough outlines of his life are plainly discernible through all the mists and shadows of legendary tradition.

Here as everywhere in historical research the law of evolution comes to our aid. The canonical

Avestan books, which are our chief authorities for what can be known of Zoroaster, were written at various periods. The exact dates cannot be given. The date of Zoroaster himself is wholly conjectural, — the estimates of Avestan scholars ranging from the fifteenth century B. C. to the seventh century B. C. Haug ascribes the Gathas, the earliest of the Avestan scriptures, to the twelfth century B. C., the Vendidad to the tenth, the later Yasna to the eighth, and the Yahsts, the latest of them, to the fifth. This estimate allows about eight hundred years for the completion of the Avesta, — a period which Haug regards as "rather too short than too long." Whatever view be taken as to the correctness of these dates, they go to illustrate the fact of the length of the historical evolution which was involved in the growth and final collection of the writings known as the Zend-Avesta. But the evolution did not stop here. It is continued a half millennium later in the great Zoroastrian revival under the Sassanian dynasty, when the Pahlavi translations and commentaries were published. What opportunity was offered during so long a stretch of years for interpolations and legendary growth is easily seen. The question now arises: What was the law of evolution in the course of these twelve to fifteen centuries? Darmesteter puts it thus: "The question is whether Zoroaster was a man converted into a god, or a god converted into a man." We have seen how Darmesteter himself decided it. He regarded the Zoro-

aster story as purely mythical. But the more conservative view seems to best fit the course of development as given in the Avesta itself, namely, that a historical man became the subject of a legendary evolution which finally invested him with semi-divine attributes and functions. If we begin with the oldest Avestan book, the Gathas, the picture of Zoroaster there given, though only in incidental touches, is thoroughly human, with no suggestion of divine functions. He first appears as a reformer and prophet, becomes a preacher of a purer faith in God to his countrymen, converts many, including the king, to his doctrines, and thus founds a new reformed religion. In this work no supernatural agencies are employed. No miracles are wrought. Zoroaster is born in the natural way and dies a natural death. There is, however, a single hint of what is to come. The religious proclamations of Zoroaster are declared to be prophetic and inspired. He is a true priest of God, and his words are divinely revealed and authoritative. Thus we are prepared for subsequent legendary additions. The scene soon changes as we proceed to the later books. Zoroaster's birth becomes miraculous. Zoroaster himself becomes a miracle-worker, and a supernatural atmosphere more and more surrounds him. Instead of being a human reformer, he appears as a divinely sent messiah and mediator armed with divine power, and finally is raised to the rank of a demi-god. This corruption of the original tradition marks a return to the

earlier polytheism against which Zoroaster himself had protested. The new ethical monotheism which he had preached yielded to polytheistic tendencies, and the doctrine of evil spirits resumed its old sway. The so-called dualism of the later Avestan and post-Avestan Zoroastrian books is really a polytheism of the most rigid sort, colored to a deeper dye by the dualistic principle, though the whole doctrine is redeemed from utter dualistic pessimism by its eschatology, which proclaims the final triumph of good and the everlasting destruction of evil.

The remarkable resemblances between events in the life of Zoroaster and similar events in the life of Christ have attracted the attention of Christian scholars. Like resemblances have already been noted by us in the account of Buddha. No doubt some of the more superficially striking resemblances are due to a post-Christian borrowing in the later stages of historical evolution. But such borrowing cannot account for those features of likeness which are after all most radical and conspicuous. And if this is clearly true in the case of Buddha, as we have seen, much more is it true beyond all doubt and controversy in the case of Zoroaster. The Avestan writings were completed some centuries before the Christian era, and the evolution of the Zoroastrian tradition was original and independent of foreign influences. The most remarkable coincidences in the lives of Zoroaster, Buddha, and Christ are explainable in the same

way that so many coincidences of every kind in history, in legend, and in folk-lore are explained. Our present studies are seeking to explain by the same critical historical process the remarkable coincidences in the trinitarian ideas of so many ancient peoples, where the theory of borrowing either direct or indirect is absolutely impossible. The case is the same with individual lives as with whole peoples. Legend works in the same way in both cases. Take, for example, one of the most striking incidents in the lives of Zoroaster, Buddha, and Christ, — the temptation by the evil spirit. In all three cases this temptation occurs at the most critical period in their careers, the character of the temptation is essentially the same, and the tempter is the same wicked spirit of evil. The superficial incidents in the three accounts vary, but the radical elements of the transaction are the same. What need of resorting to the theory of borrowing when the evidence is wholly against it? Human nature and human life are essentially the same in their exhibitions in all mankind. A great temptation is inherent in the very nature of things as a component part of a great character and career. Similar temptations by the Devil are to be found in other lives. Demonology has played an immense part in legendary history. The lives of the early Christian monks were filled with such accounts. I might illustrate this point by other like coincidences in the lives of these three men who became the founders of three religions. One

example more must suffice. All these traditions contain a miraculous birth through a divine parentage or power, but the Zoroastrian account goes a step further. It makes the birth of the *mother* of Zoroaster immaculate and miraculous, and, though this development of tradition does not appear in the New Testament, it does appear in the post-apostolic apocryphal legends that quickly grew up around Jesus and his mother, and the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, as well as of her son, not only became an article of Christian faith, but remains a dogma of the Catholic church to this day. The doctrine and cultus of the Virgin Mary, be it noted, is not peculiar to Christianity. The virginity of the mothers of the founders of a new religion is repeated again and again in legendary history. Zoroastrianism has its virgin mother; so Buddhism; and the list might be lengthened. Illustrious men have been thus partially deified by ascribing to them a divine fatherhood. Plato, in the golden age of Athenian culture, did not escape the fate of genius. Legend made Apollo his father. Even mythology has its virgins. Athene, the patron goddess of Athens, was endowed with the special gift of virginity, and hence the name of her great temple, the Parthenon. It is natural to invest any great religious reformer, especially in an uncritical age, with peculiar relations to the heavenly world. First he becomes a special messenger or prophet of God. The next step is easy, viz., to impute to his message a divine

inspiration. How natural, then, to believe that his birth was not in the ordinary way! Human motherhood explains the reality of his humanity. Divine fatherhood explains what is supernatural and miraculous in his life and character. Incarnation is an obvious corollary. A demi-god or god-man is the logical result. These stages of legendary evolution, so easily developed in the times of a credulous and superstitious faith, have been repeated again and again in the history of religion.

No trinity had yet appeared in Zoroastrianism, but one feature of the developed Zoroastrian doctrine was preparing the way for a trinitarian tendency, namely, the raising of Zoroaster from the rank of a human reformer to that of a divine messiah and mediatorial demi-god. The religion of Zoroaster himself, if we may judge from the Gathas, which purport to record many of his sayings, was one of remarkable spirituality and purity. Righteousness, sin, moral agency, free will, moral law and its sanction, involving punishment and reward, the spiritual and immortal character of the soul, and final judgment, with its everlasting issues, — such radical truths of the moral consciousness seem to have been cardinal in Zoroaster's own religious faith. Naturally his reform was laid on the lines of a redemptive movement of God for the healing and saving of mankind from the miserable condition into which they had fallen through the evils inherent in their natural condition. The key-note of his gospel was

redemption. It was a divine offer of help and salvation through a human instrument. So close is the analogy between the Zoroastrian prophetism and messianism and that of the later Jews, that one cannot help surmising some historical connection between the two; and when we remember that the Jewish messianism in its fully developed form, as it appeared in the two centuries before Christ, was post-exilic, the inference becomes not at all improbable that the Jews of the Captivity gathered many of their later messianic ideas from Zoroastrianism. This is quite surely the case with the Jewish eschatology. The book of Daniel is post-exilic. The doctrines of the immortality of the soul, of the resurrection, of evil spirits, especially of Satan the arch fiend, of heaven and hell, which appear in later Judaism, are quite clearly of Zoroastrian origin.

It is in the *second* stage of Zoroastrian evolution that the element of mediation and redemption through a divinely commissioned savior becomes more marked. As in the evolution of the Christian trinitarian dogma, a human messiahship gave way to a semi-divine mediatorship, so with the Zoroastrian movement. But here occurred a peculiar chapter in this evolution. A new actor appears on the scene in the person of Sosiosh, "the benefactor" or savior. Let it be noted in passing that this term "savior," in a religious sense, is not original in the New Testament. The Zend word Sosiosh clearly corresponds in meaning to the Greek word σωτήρ (savior).

Plutarch, writing about the time of the reduction of the oral traditions of Christ's life and gospel to written form, styles the gods σωτῆρες, or saviors and friends of men. So, in the New Platonic school, Æsculapius, the god of medicine and healing, became the centre of a special religious cult, and came to be commonly designated among his worshipers as Ὁ σωτήρ, that is, "The Savior." In the Zoroastrian tradition this person, who appears under the title of Sosiosh, is purely mythical. He is represented to be a son of Zoroaster, but he is to be supernaturally born from a wife of Zoroaster at the very end of the world, when the measure of its miseries is full. Then his saving work as a messenger of Ormuzd will be completed, in raising the dead, rewarding the righteous with everlasting happiness, and annihilating the whole kingdom of the wicked. This account of Sosiosh, so plainly mythical, yet so closely connected with Zoroaster's life, is one of Darmesteter's strongest points against the historicity of Zoroaster himself, and I confess that it well-nigh breaks down the historical probability of the whole Zoroastrian tradition, though I do not even yet give up the view of West and Mills. But in either case it is clear that in the later parts of the Avesta we have passed completely out of authentic history into the region of legend. The part played by the law of evolution is well illustrated by the Sosiosh myth. In the earlier Avesta Sosiosh is mentioned, but only in a general way. The later writings

grow more and more explicit and particular. His supernatural character and mission from Ormuzd is fully set forth. It is declared of him that he "will come from the region of the dawn to free the world from death and decay," "when the dead shall arise and immortality commence." Darmesteter believes this to be a nature or solar myth, and suggests that Zoroaster was originally a storm god. Already in the Zend-Avesta Sosiosh is a son of Zoroaster, to be supernaturally born at the end of Time, but, when we pass from the Avesta to the Pahlavi Bundahish, Sosiosh becomes the last of three prophets, or divine messengers of Ormuzd, each of whom is to reign a thousand years, — the name Sosiosh being given especially to the last. These Zoroastrian millenniums have an interesting historical connection with the millennium of Jewish expectation and hope which passed over into Christianity. The third and last millennium, which Sosiosh will inaugurate and conclude with the resurrection, judgment, and destruction of death and hell, became the great rallying point of Zoroastrian faith.

We have already referred to the connection between the Jewish messianism and millennium and the Zoroastrian ideas. Quite as remarkable are the coincidences between the Zoroastrian doctrine of "last things" and the Christian. The Christian eschatology, beginning with the second coming of Christ, followed by the resurrection of the dead and the general judgment, and conclud-

ing with the eternal rewards of heaven and the eternal punishments of hell, is so completely a repetition of the Zoroastrian "last things," that a borrowing from one side or the other seems almost a fact to be accepted at once, were no historical relation directly traceable. Certain similar eschatological elements indeed are to be found in other Ethnic religions, as for example the dogmas of personal immortality, of heaven and hell, which are clearly set forth in the Greek mythology and later Greek philosophy, and are made familiar to us in Plato and Plutarch. But the doctrine of a bodily resurrection through the instrumentality of a divinely sent mediator is surely unique in all Ethnic religions, and the direct historical connection that can be clearly traced through Judaism between the Christian and the Zoroastrian dogmas seems to remove all ground for doubt. It is my own growing conviction that much of the eschatological language of the New Testament can best be explained by reference to the Zoroastrian Persian messianism and eschatology. The Jewish post-exilic and pre-Christian writings are full of eschatological ideas and language plainly suggestive of Persian sources, and these same ideas and expressions reappear in the sayings of Christ and the letters of Paul. What a Zoroastrian ring there is in Paul's words in the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." The book of Revelation simply gathers up all the Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian figurative language in

its vivid portrayal of the eschatological faith of the age in which it was written. The prominence of fire all through the New Testament as the element of destruction and punishment is a peculiarly Zoroastrian reminiscence. The description in the Second Epistle of Peter of the final conflagration, in which "the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up," is an exact transcript of the Zoroastrian theory of the mode of the ending of this present world. The apocalyptic lake of fire into which death and Hades are cast is also Zoroastrian, except that, while the fire of the Zoroastrian theory involves annihilation, the apocalyptic fire burns, without annihilating, forever. I will only add that the Devil or Satan of the Bible is the Ahriman of the Avesta, and was, we cannot doubt, a direct importation from Persia, though the allusions to the Devil and his kingdom in the Fourth Gospel and Johannine Epistles are apparently Gnostic in character. But Gnosticism is distinctly Zoroastrian in origin and is directly based on the Persian dualism.

We now come to the *third* stage in the trinitarian development of the Zoroastrian doctrine. It is to be noted that no full trinity has yet emerged. The doctrine of Sosiosh as a semi-divine mediator and savior has indeed prepared the way for such a result, but the movement here paused and in fact was never so fully completed as in other Ethnic trinities. We may well here ask the reasons why; and they are close at hand. To begin with, original Zoroastrianism was a monotheistic reaction

from the polytheism out of which it sprang, like the Hebraism of the Old Testament. The history of Judaism shows how little ground there is in such a monotheism for a trinitarian development. The natural soil of a trinity of gods is polytheism rather than monotheism, as we have seen in the history of the Ethnic trinities, all of which sprang from polytheistic sources. It was once a favorite idea of conservative scholars such as Hardwick and Rawlinson that the Persian dualism was the offspring of an original monotheism; but recent investigations in philology and comparative religion have shown it to be utterly without foundation, as also the kindred idea concerning the earliest doctrine of the Hebrew people. The monotheism of the Old Testament beginning with the first chapter of Genesis is a reformed version of an older polytheistic myth which the Chaldæo-Babylonian slabs of the resurrected library in Nineveh have laid open before our eyes, and which cuneiform scholars are already learning to read.

It is not, then, surprising that Zoroastrianism, with its strong leaning to a monotheistic-dualistic rather than polytheistic view of deity, should stop short of a full trinity, which is a direct step backwards towards the ground once left behind. Such a step could be taken only when a religious corruption and decline had set in.

There is another reason for the incompleteness of the Zoroastrian trinitarianism even in its fullest development. Persia at its highest point of civil-

ization never rose to the same rank with India or Greece. Its culture included poetry, art, chronicle, and ethics, but never reached the still higher sphere of abstract speculative thought. No school of pure philosophy ever flourished there. Thus the Persian religion was never subjected to a metaphysical and scholastic treatment. Its religious system was theosophic rather than philosophic, — a work of the imagination rather than of the pure speculative reason. It would be idle to expect, under such circumstances, the evolution of a complete theological trinity, and we shall not find it; but, as we have seen, a step was taken which went a long way toward such a conclusion, and a trinitarian shadow was cast which will finally give us a mythological triad, if not a philosophical trinity. This step was its Sosiosh mediation doctrine. The idea of a mediator between God and man is a fundamental element in every trinitarian dogma, and it became central and regnant in Zoroastrian belief. This doctrine of a divine mediator does not demand a trinity as a philosophical necessity, but it naturally leads to it unless counter ideas are in the way. Just such a counter idea was in the way to the Zoroastrian believer, namely, his deep prejudice against the old animistic polytheism. Only when this prejudice was suffered to decline and die out could the trinitarian evolution have free way. This was precisely the historical course which the Persian religion took. The Avesta itself clearly discloses

a revolutionary polytheistic tendency. The overthrow of the Persian empire by Alexander introduced Greek influences and ideas. The rise of the Parthian kingdom with its semi-barbarism still further disorganized and demoralized the old Persian religious faith. The ancient Zend language in which the Avesta was written grew corrupt, and out of it emerged the new Persian dialect called Pahlavi. Thus the Zoroastrian sacred scriptures ceased to be read by the people, and the Zoroastrian monotheism gave way rapidly to the polytheism which reigned around it. Its very history became more and more obscure. Not till the new Persian empire of the Sassanidæ in the third century A. D. was a new chapter added, and a new movement given to the mediating principle which had characterized it from the beginning. But the significance of this new chapter lies in the fact that it leaves the original Zoroastrian starting-point and line of evolution and reverts back to the Madzean polytheism out of which Zoroaster himself arose.

The two earliest stages of Zoroastrian trinitarian evolution, as we have seen, were the outgrowth of the mission of Zoroaster, — a historical character. Though they quickly passed from history to legend, and then to myth, they at least started from historical ground. Not so with the third stage. It was mythological from the beginning, and gathered around one of the most ancient of the Aryan divinities, Mithra. Mithra, or Mitra, first appears

as a sun god in the Indian Vedas in close association with Varuna, the great heavenly sky-god, and already his mediatorial function is visible. He is "the giver," "the generous one," "the friend," of man. It is in a similar form and function that Mithra appears in the Avestan writings. He is a creature of Ormuzd, "the created light," that is, a sun-god. As such he is "a servant and organ" of Ormuzd, mediating between him and man. But through the Avestan period Mithra remains in the background. First Zoroaster himself, and next Sosiosh, his semi-divine son, are the chief instruments through which Ormuzd carries on his benevolent designs for the amelioration and final salvation of man. Not till the decline of the original Zoroastrianism has fairly set in does Mithra appear as the great mediating divinity, at last supplanting, not only Zoroaster and Sosiosh, but even Ormuzd himself. The history of this curious evolution, involving entirely new cyclic movements on new lines, is obscure. Enough here to say that it gathered force as the original Zoroastrianism declined, without any apparent opposition. Even in the latest Yahsts of the Avesta Mithra is plainly rising into greater prominence. He is thus described, in the prayer called Mihir Yahst, as "holy, the most beautiful of creatures," all-seeing and all-powerful. Especially is he "the protector and patron of truth-loving men" and "the dispenser of blessings." He is also the "most victorious" servant of Ormuzd against the Kingdom of

Evil. Ahriman trembles before him. He "protects the poor and oppressed," and "defends the faithful against evil spirits, against death, and leads them toward immortality." It is remarkable that in this very period, when a new mediating god is coming to the front, the first sign of a divine triad should display itself. One of the Persian kings, Artaxerxes Mnemon, rededicating a Zoroastrian temple which Darius his ancestor had built, solemnly declared: "By the grace of Ormuzd I have here established Anhita and Mithra. May Ormuzd, Anhita, and Mithra protect me." This new trinity plays no great part in the later Zoroastrianism. Mithra becomes the central figure of it, absorbing more and more the functions of Sosiosh "the savior," as is seen in the application to him of the term "mediator." Such is the testimony of Plutarch, who wrote in the first century of the Christian era. Describing the Zoroastrian dualism, Plutarch says (Isis and Osiris, 46): "Mithra is between the two (Ormuzd and Ahriman), for which reason the Persians call Mithra 'the Mediator' (μεσίτης)." Thus Zoroastrianism proper gave way to the new Mithraism. Mithra as "Mediator" became the centre of a new cult which in the second and third centuries A. D. was very popular and widespread in the Roman world, patronized by emperors, and with special temples in Rome itself. It was the mediatorial character of Mithra that gave his worship its popularity — a popularity so great that at one time it threat-

ened to rival and even eclipse Christianity itself, which was also making rapid strides with its own Christian mediation doctrine. Mithra, in the eyes of his worshipers, was the "living and abiding link between the visible and the invisible." He was "the secondary principle of good," "the conductor of departed souls" to the narrow bridge which must be crossed to reach the heavenly world. As the dualistic doctrine of evil in all its forms had a primary place in Mithraism, and was in harmony with the pessimism and religious reaction of the age, it is not wonderful that the Mithra cult should have assumed a strongly sacrificial and bloody character. Mithra himself became the great high priest in these sacrifices. He was represented as slaying a bull, in virtue of his atoning function. The *taurobolium* was the most solemn sacrificial rite of Mithraic worship, symbolizing and efficiently procuring for the suppliant for whom it was performed remission of sins and regeneration to a new spiritual and heavenly life. It was indeed a baptism by blood. The subject of it was placed naked under the altar of sacrifice, so that the blood of the victim might be shed directly upon him. A strange transaction indeed, and strangely like to the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission!" Strange, I say, when we consider the character of the period in which it occurred. It is a suggestive proof of the terrible power of sin and of its remorseful workings upon a soul.

I have already referred to the fact that Mithra, who was originally subordinate to Ormuzd, and even reduced to the third place in the triad, subsequently rose practically to the first place, supplanting Ormuzd himself. Such a process, by which the mediating member of the trinity, as the special friend and savior of men, should become first and nearest in the thoughts, and affections, and hopes of men, and hence in time first in the divine order of the gods, is most natural, and we have already found it a marked feature of the historical evolution of most of the Ethnic trinities. Thus in the Babylonian triad Marduk, the mediating sun-god, usurps the place of Ea, his father. The same was true of Vishnu-Krishna in the Hindoo trinity, who, in his capacity of god-man and mediator, reduced Brahma to almost a shadow. So Mithraism pushed Ormuzd back into a place of inferiority, or rather he was quietly displaced and forgotten. The triad was practically reduced to unity in the Mithraic faith. I must refer to my earlier work, "A Critical History," etc., for a complete account of the remarkable evolution of the Christian trinity in the same direction, by which the original subordination doctrine of the early Greek church was transformed into a theory of triunity in which the three were made absolutely equal, or rather were reduced to personal unity manifesting itself in a plural form, — a view which at last reached a result curiously similar to the Mithraic, namely, that the Father,

the first and most exalted person of the Patristic Trinity, has become practically swallowed up and lost in the absoluteness of the deity of the Second Person, the incarnate Son, known on earth as Jesus of Nazareth. To make the analogy more complete it only needed that Zoroaster himself, the founder of the reformed Madzean religion, should have remained the central figure in its evolution as he was at first.

One radical difference between the Mithraic and the Christian conception of mediatorship is clearly discernible. Mithra was a mediator between Ormuzd and Ahriman, while the Christian scheme made Christ a mediator between God and mankind. It is true that Origen taught that Christ paid a ransom to Satan and so released mankind from his power, and this thoroughly materialistic view became the traditional church doctrine for nearly a thousand years. Augustine accepted it without any questioning, and his authority carried it on into the Middle Ages. Anselm and Abelard seem to have been the first to question it. But the doctrine of Paul and of the Epistle to the Hebrews, though essentially differing in other respects, agreed in this, that the mediation wrought by Christ was between God and sinful men, and both views were founded in the Old Testament sacrificial system, which knew nothing of Satan as a party to the transaction, and made much of God's holy law and of man's violation of it, beginning with Adam the head of the

race. Anselm, the true founder of the substitutional theory of atonement, was in harmony on this point with the Old Testament and Paul. Whence Origen derived his theory of mediatorship between God and the Devil is not clear. But he was well acquainted with the Gnostic dualistic ideas of his day and found them even in the Fourth Gospel, and thus might easily have been influenced toward a view which quite harmonized with the tendencies around him. It was in this very period in the history of Christianity that the doctrine of Satan and his Kingdom of Evil became especially prominent in the faith of the church, not only in its creed but also in its life. Monasticism, which started from a strongly dualistic conception of the world, in its earlier history is full of illustrations of this view of Satan as sharing this world with God, and in the legendary lives of the more famous monks the Devil and his demons and the powers of good contend on almost equal terms. I have already stated my opinion as to the historical background of this whole phase of Christian thought, including the eschatology of which it forms a part. It is Zoroastrian and Persian, and I am prepared to believe that Origen's theory of a ransom paid by Christ to Satan was somehow drawn, though perhaps indirectly, from this source. It was characteristic of the Zoroastrian dualism that it viewed Ormuzd as the representative of goodness, and light, and joy. All badness and darkness, physical, intellectual, or moral, all the

miseries and sorrow of this world, including sickness and death, were the work of Ahriman. Ormuzd was always the beneficent friend of man, and revealed his beneficence through mediating instruments such as Zoroaster, Sosiosh, and Mithra. The conception of a mediator who should propitiate such a being by offerings of appeasement was wholly foreign to Zoroastrian thought. The Mithraic cult illustrates the growing sense of the moral evil and misery in the world, and of the power for evil of Ahriman and his allies. The *taurobolium*, though so materialistic in form, was a means toward a moral regeneration and new spiritual life in this world and the next. The myth which lay behind it of Mithra's slaying a bull with his own hand was based on the conception of Mithra as the great mediating power between good and evil, between man and his arch enemy Ahriman. He was, in the eyes of his worshipers, the sole regenerator and savior from sin and death, and all moral evil. One cannot study deeply the Zoroastrian Mithraic faith without a growing sense of its lofty, pure, and spiritual character. It is no wonder, in an age when the moral nature and instincts of men were being aroused to a new eagerness for religious light and truth to heal the moral maladies of the declining empire, that this Oriental reformed cult, behind which was the dim but attractive figure of one of the world's saints, should have arrested and drawn the hearts of many seekers after truth, and even rivaled that other religion, coming from the

same Oriental quarter, whose teachings and offers of spiritual good were in such general harmony,—both working for the regeneration and salvation of men.

I have alluded to Origen's conception of the work of Christ in the atonement, so strangely suggestive of the Mithraic doctrine. It is interesting to note that in another direction he was led toward a similar Mithraic conclusion. M. Jean Reville, in his "La Religion sous les Severes," has well said that "the cult of Mithra offers very great analogies to the cult of the Gnostics." The Gnostics were in fact essentially dualistic Zoroastrians in Christian disguise, and we must not forget how widespread were the Gnostic heresies in the Christian church in this period. Irenæus recounts about a hundred different Gnostic sects. Origen and his Alexandrian school formed a sort of mediating position between the church and the Gnostic parties. Origen himself was inclined to a free and tolerant speculation. One of his speculations, which afterward was used to his discredit, was his theory of the final restoration of all souls. Even Satan in his view might be restored to holiness. This idea was based on his doctrine of God as good and desiring the salvation of all moral beings, and of free will by which all such beings could be recovered from sin if so disposed. Now both these ideas are in complete accord with Zoroastrian theology. This is not the place to discuss the matter further. I will only add that Origen's influence

was great and pervasive in the early development of Christian theology, and it is my own belief that the Zoroastrian religion explains not only the widespread Gnostic heresies, but also the dualistic element which entered so deeply into Christian soteriology and eschatology, and which has continued to leaven Christian theological thought even to the present day.[1]

The subsequent triumph of Christianity and extinction of Zoroastrianism in its later Mithraic form used to be regarded by Christian historians as evidence of the superiority of the former, and of its miraculous and divine origin. In fact, the decisive blow was struck by Christian emperors. Their whole policy — from the time of the politic and tolerant Constantine, with the exception of Julian the New Platonist and perhaps that also of Valentinian, who, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, though a Christian, stood evenly balanced between the two religious parties — was directed to the suppression of all the Ethnic religions and rites. In 377 the prefect of Rome ordered the temples of Mithra to be closed; and when Theodosius in 394 entered Rome a conqueror he issued

[1] Outside of distinctively Christian ideas the dualistic explanation of the world and its moral mysteries has of late had a strong attraction for philosophical thinkers. James Mill, according to the statement of his son, J. S. Mill, agnostic as he was on the whole subject, regarded dualism as the most satisfactory and probable of all the theories in vogue. I may add that the French historian Michelet, in a little book, *Bible de l'Humanité*, concludes a review of the leading creeds of the world by expressing his own decided preference for the dualistic Zoroastrian.

an edict commanding the entire suppression of all pagan worship. Every temple was shut, and many fanes made sacred by ancient tradition were ruthlessly violated. Perhaps the most violent act was the sacking of the House and Temple of Vesta in the Forum, whose cult had come down from the very origin of Rome itself, and was held in the highest veneration. The worship of the goddess was broken up. The vestal virgins were driven out. Their House, that had been sacred from all intrusion for a thousand years, was ransacked, its treasures scattered, and the doors barred. Whether Christianity itself in this period of its prosperity and growing power could have endured such treatment and outlived it cannot be told, since, fortunately, no imperial pagan reaction came. But Gibbon's remark seems historically just, that no religion can long survive when its outward worship is completely suppressed; and the conjecture of Renan in this connection is not without warrant: "One might say that if Christianity had been arrested in its career by some mortal malady, the world might have been Mithraistic." Force and violence have played a great part in the religious conquests of the world. The acts of Theodosius were repeated by Charlemagne in the conversion of the Saxons, our own ancestors, only with increased wantonness and barbarity. And as one gazes to-day on the ruins of the Temple and House of Vesta which the spade of the archæologist has opened to our view, with its statues of vestals

once famous in history, one is reminded irresistibly of similar ruins of beautiful English abbeys, with like statues of famous abbots and monks, that were suppressed and dismantled by the strong, tyrannical hand of Henry VIII., their inmates driven out and suffered to wander and die in penury, and their very names given over to calumny and reproach, until at last a new revision of history has done them too tardy justice. The forcible overthrow of Zoroastrian Mithraism and of English monasticism may have been for the providential good of the world; but the manner in which it was done is no less abominable and worthy of condemnation. It is, and always must be, against good morals to "do evil that good may come," and the verdict of the Apostle against all such ill-doers remains unchallenged: "whose damnation is just." But again history has its revenges, and I confess to a high satisfaction in being able to contribute my mite to such a result in this study of the Zoroastrian religion; and with this thought in mind I cannot better close this chapter than by quoting a single passage from its sacred books: "*We worship the souls of the holy men and women, born at any time and in any place, whose consciences struggle, or will struggle, or have struggled for the good.*"

CHAPTER VI

THE GREEK HOMERIC TRINITY

We now pass to the third Aryan chapter of trinitarian evolution, — in some respects the most remarkable of all, and of special interest to the Christian scholar in view of its direct historical relation to the evolution of the Christian trinity.

The Greek religion first appears in Homer and Hesiod as a fully developed polytheism. The instinct and love of the beautiful in nature and in art, which so distinguished the Greek people, is well illustrated in their polytheistic mythology. On the ethical side the Greek gods and goddesses do not appear to advantage when compared with those of other Ethnic religions, especially with the Indian or Zoroastrian divinities. Plato prohibited the reading of Homer in his ideal republic because of its immoral stories. How far this charge may be explained away by considerations drawn from the naturalistic origin and symbolical character of the Greek mythology cannot here be fully discussed. There is no doubt, however, that recent philological and archæological studies have done much toward setting the matter in a new light. But, from the literary and artistic point of view, the superiority of the Greek mythology to all

others known to history is unquestionable. The Iliad and the Odyssey are filled with narratives and pictures in which the Greek gods and goddesses are the chief figures that are unrivaled in ancient literature. Greek art, which remains even in its ruins to-day the wonder of the world, had its birth in the Greek religion, and it continued to draw its inspiration from this source throughout its golden age. The sublimest forms of Greek architecture were temples, its most perfect statues were of the patron divinities of these temples, and its lost art of coloring was lavished on their decoration. The Parthenon, built in the days of Pericles, was a miracle in stone of the religious genius of Greece.

I have alluded to the symbolism which characterizes the Greek mythology. Such symbolism is equally characteristic of all mythologies, and it is in part the key to a correct interpretation of them. The grotesqueness, and even hideousness, to our refined taste, of some mythological incidents and sculptures connected with the Ethnic mythologies seem to indicate the comparatively barbarous character of the people among whom they originated. Like men, like gods. The artistic superiority of Greek mythology simply proves the keener artistic sensitiveness and creative power of the Greek mind. In comparing the different Ethnic mythologies, the question is not so much one of morals as it is one of artistic mental development. It has not been clearly under-

stood, until quite recently, how fundamental symbolism is in human thought and language, and how deeply imbedded certain symbols are in the traditions of the race. It may seem strange that the immoral stories in Homer should not have been sifted out in the long course of years in which those poems were being gathered and edited, or that the uncouth descriptions and images of divinities, such as are found even in Indian polytheistic literature and art, should have held their ground, and even grown more and more grotesque as Hindoo culture advanced; but it must be remembered that nothing is so tenacious in its grasp on tradition or popular faith as the use of symbols which have become venerable by time, however inartistic they may be, if they are only expressions of some truth that is held in reverence. Language itself, which is the great vehicle of all communication among men, is essentially a system of symbols. Every religion is full of symbolism, not only in its forms of worship, but also in its dogmas.

This is well illustrated in the sign of the cross, which in Christian times has been made so especially significant of Christian truth. It may be a surprise to some of my readers to be told that this symbol of the cross is as old as history itself. Indeed, its origin is hidden in prehistoric times. The Greek or Maltese cross, with its four arms of equal length, which is worn by Roman Popes on the breast, appears on the breasts of Assyrian kings nine or ten centuries before the birth of

Christ, as is witnessed to by Assyrio-Babylonian cylinders in the British Museum. If these clay tablets were unaccompanied by vouchers their genuineness might well be suspected, but when we learn that evidence which cannot be gainsaid and which has come to us from every quarter of the world is at hand in marvelous abundance, all doubt becomes unavailing. Perhaps there is no more important, and surely no more wonderful, archæological line of recent discovery than that which has dealt with the subject of symbols and the deep-seated character of their influence on mankind from the beginning of human life on this earth. These symbols are almost entirely of a religious and sacred character, representing human conceptions of the mysteries of nature and life and divinity. We have seen how prominent in all the early Ethnic religions was the worship of the sun as the great representative in the visible world of divine power and life and blessing to men. The sun-god, by whatever name he was called, in the different languages or mythologies of nations, was the most universally venerated divinity in the whole pantheon. It is no wonder, then, that symbols of the sun should be found to be the most ancient and universal of all. These symbols were varied in form, according to the aspect of the god represented. The circle and the wheel are illustrations, representing the form of the sun and his course through the heavens, and also his vitalizing power. The wheel suggests motion, and its spokes suggest

the sun's rays which penetrate everywhere, imparting heat and life and light in every form. These religious ideas were the nuclei of others. A whole theology and philosophy might be symbolized by the circle and wheel. How easily they may suggest eternal motion and its eternal source, and hence the eternal divine power and goodness and benevolence? But among all these symbols the cross stands out as supreme in its dignity and in the universality of its use. It is to be found in all parts of the world, from Iceland to the Ganges, and in both hemispheres. Historical investigations have wholly failed to trace its origin. Antiquarian excavations have revealed it everywhere. Schliemann found it in the ruins of prehistoric Troy. It has been figured not only on the breasts of Babylonian kings, on the vestments of Greek gods and goddesses, — on the tunic of Athene and on the breast of Apollo, — but also on tombs and altars in Gaul, Spain, and Scandinavia. If its exact significance cannot always be ascertained, its general character is clear beyond dispute. The conclusion forced upon us is that the cross, as a sacred symbol, belonged to the earliest traditions of the race, and represented religious ideas which formed the original *credo* of the ancestors of mankind.

The old idea that this sign is original with Christianity is of course exploded. The new significance that was given to it and the way in which it was developed after the time of Constantine in

the fourth century are matters of Christian history into which I cannot go at length. For the sake of those, however, who are not critically acquainted with the historical origins of Christianity, I will say that the symbol of the cross in its original and ancient significance is to be entirely distinguished from the meaning that came to be attached to it in Christian tradition. The new Christian symbolism was connected with the manner of Christ's death. Whether the wood on which he was impaled was cruciform is uncertain. The Greek word σταυρός means an upright stake. A cross-piece was not essential. The more common form of it in Christ's day seems to have been a T. This ignominious instrument of punishment came to be idealized by Christian believers into a sign of glorification and triumph. Whether there was at first any direct historical connection between the old Ethnic symbol and the new Christian sign is quite obscure. Probability is against it, for the two figures on which the symbolism was based were at first quite unlike. There was little resemblance between the equal-armed cross which was the usual religious symbol of the Ethnic religions and the σταυρός or upright stake, even with the added cross-piece at the top, such as was used in crucifixion. The so-called Latin cross, which was distinguished by the lengthening of the lower arm, was a much later Western form: while the crucifix in which Christ is represented as hanging on the cross did not come into use as a symbol until

as late as the seventh century. Thus the very forms of the Ethnic and Christian crosses suggest a wholly different origin. No doubt the Christian symbol was at first wholly independent of the pagan, deriving its significance from the method of Christ's death. But when we take into view the fact that the Christian church grew largely out of pagan soil and that many ancestral pagan ideas and customs were merely transformed and adopted into the new faith, it ceases to be surprising that the Ethnic symbol of the cross and even its forms should gradually become blended with those of the new Christian religion. Certainly the original difference between the significance of the Ethnic symbolism and that of the Christian was radical. The pre-Christian cross, in its various forms, has nothing to do with death or any mode of it: it rather symbolizes life, material and spiritual. One of its most common forms, found everywhere, is the so-called *swastika* or gammated cross — a Hindoo word taking its name from the bending of the four ends. It has been suggested, and with not a little probability, that the curving of these ends is intended to represent the idea of motion or gyration, like that of the wheel. These two symbols of the cross and the wheel are closely related and are often found together, and sometimes were united into one composite emblem; and it is my own impression that the original idea behind both symbols is that of motion as the starting-point of all life and of the world itself. The idea

of God as the divine mover is not far off. This view of the origin of things, which was thus expressed by the imaginative faculties of early man in symbolic forms, was adopted by Aristotle and made the key to his philosophy, in his view that the eternal movement of the world necessarily implied an eternal mover and that such a principle of motion could be none other than God.

I have referred to the obscurity attaching to the way in which the Ethnic cross, which was a sacred symbol of life, motion, the world, and Deity, became confounded with the Christian cross as a symbol of Christ's redeeming death. The early Christian Fathers frequently allude to the form of Christ's death, and the term cross becomes a common expression for it. They also distinguish this term from the pagan cross, with which they show themselves acquainted, — expressly denying that they are chargeable with any superstitious use of the cross as an image or symbolical figure. The practice of making the sign of the cross with the hand appears quite early. Tertullian describes it as common in his day, but the use of material crosses is considerably later. Constantine set this fashion by affixing a cross to his *labarum* or banner, and also by putting crosses on churches and palaces. From Constantine's day the cross became the great symbol of Christianity as a power of life through death, — the instrument of death being thus transfigured into the sign of a redeemed and glorified life. As the Ethnic religions grad-

ually decayed and finally became well-nigh extinct in the Roman world, the Ethnic conception of the cross as a sacred sign or symbol faded out and the Christian view took its place, or it may rather be said that the two conceptions were gradually and unconsciously blended together.

It is interesting to examine the remains of Christian art in the catacombs or early Christian burial-places, and in early churches, and there note the curious mixture of pagan and Christian symbols of the cross. For example, there is figured on a Christian monument together with the monogram of Christ the *swastika* or gammated cross, which is a purely Ethnic symbol and which tended to disappear in subsequent Christian times. This peculiar form of the cross, with its four ends bent as if to symbolize motion, is found again and again in the catacombs; but the most remarkable example, perhaps, is a mosaic of Christ represented as the Good Shepherd, on whose tunic the gammated cross is twice pictured. These paintings show that the artist had either confounded or consciously blended together Ethnic and Christian ideas. Such amalgamations are not isolated cases; they are common in early Christian art. In the catacomb of Saint Calixtus the pagan Orpheus is painted as captivating the wild beasts with his lyre directly under the Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus; and the pagan myth of Cupid and Psyche is found pictured on Christian sarcophagi. These examples only illustrate the persistence of ancient

survivals, especially in the form of religious symbolism. Perhaps the most curious of them all is seen in the custom of the Popes of Rome, continued to this day, of wearing on their breasts the Greek cross, — a close imitation of the cross worn by Assyrian kings in the ninth century B. C. We should expect a Roman Pope to wear a Latin cross; yet the Greek cross is a direct historical survival of the Assyrian cross. Christianity was the offspring of Judaism, as Judaism was in its turn the offshoot of the Assyrio-Babylonian Chaldæism. Abraham "The Hebrew," through his descendants, is the direct historical connecting link between the Assyrian king and the Roman Pope.[1]

[1] A good example of a similar transfer of a pagan symbol to Christian use is the *nimbus* or aureole, which began to be used as a Christian sign of saintliness or divinity in the fifth or sixth century. Before this it had become common as a sign of dignity on the heads of emperors and empresses. Its origin is hid in antiquity. Some regard it as derived from India, where it encircled the heads of the Hindoo mythological gods. In Ethnic Greek and Latin literature the *nimbus* represented the glory that invested a divine being. Thus Virgil describes Juno as "*nimbo succincta*." Later Christian art made it a special symbol of Christ's divine nature. The Virgin Mary soon received the same sign, and subsequently it became a perquisite of all specially holy personages. There is, no doubt, a close relation between the Ethnic cross and the nimbus as sacred symbols. Both seem to be connected with the sun, and represent different aspects of it. It is not a far cry that they should be transferred to Christian symbolism as signs of the "Sun of righteousness." A curious illustration of the amalgamation of the two signs and of their common derivation from Ethnic sources is given in a mosaic of the sixth century in a Christian church at Ravenna, where the Emperor Justinian is painted with a nimbus around his head. Near him stands the Archbishop Maximianus, who holds a *Latin* cross

I trust that this digression has not been without its interest and instruction. I have been led to introduce it in order to enforce the fact that the Ethnic polytheistic mythology was essentially a system of symbolism. This was preëminently true of the Aryan religions, which were forms of nature worship. Their divinities were largely impersonations of natural forces and phenomena; and in this personifying process the Greek genius found full play. In fact all the Ethnic theogonies and cosmogonies are mythological stories which are the work of the imagination of early man, using for material the natural phenomena in the midst of which he lived. The only difference

in his hands, while a soldier near by grasps a wheel-shaped shield on which is figured the monogram of Christ, — the six limbs of the monogram clearly representing the spokes of the wheel. But more significant still is the opposite mosaic of the Empress Theodora. She also has a nimbus around her head, and, further, two *Greek* crosses distinctly marked on her breast; while the garments of one of her attendants are covered with small Greek crosses, and a curtain has for its chief ornament figures of the *swastika* or cross with bent arms. Whether consciously or not, here are brought together in a single series of Christian mosaics symbols of most diverse origin in form and meaning — the circle, the wheel, the Greek cross, the gammated *swastika*, the Latin cross, the decussated cross or monogram of Christ. Perhaps the most interesting feature of all is the Greek cross on the breast of Theodora. It is another historical link between the Ethnic Assyrian kings and the Christian Popes, giving further evidence that the tradition of the Ethnic cross as a sacred religious symbol was never broken, but only changed in its symbolical character with the lapse of time. For a full account of the history of the cross as a mystical symbol and of the persistency of such symbolical survivals, with many illustrations, see *La Réligion des Gaulois*, par Alexandre Bertrand, Paris, 1897.

between the Greek myth-maker and his Aryan or Semitic or Turanian neighbor was that his imaginative fancy was somehow of a finer mould than theirs. Whether his religious consciousness was more fully developed is another question, the answer to which must depend on a deeper study of the Greek character and religion. Certainly the two great poems known as the Homeric belong to a class of literature that immensely out-distances all the products of the other Ethnic religions in the mythological age, and make us wonder whence they came, and what was the real source of their inspiration.

Opening the Iliad with the view of seeking the trinitarian elements which may be found, at first sight its polytheism seems to overshadow the whole scene. Gods without number, and of all sorts and conditions from the highest to the lowest, are inextricably mingled with demi-gods and heroes and human beings. But ere long a principle of division among them appears. The oldest Greek trinitarianism seems to have arisen from the trinal character of nature, as it appeared to unscientific minds, with its three regions of land, water, and sky. Hence the first nature-trinity, consisting of Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, — Zeus being the great god of the sky, Poseidon the god of the sea, and Hades the god of the earth and of the underworld. The generative, or family idea, also appears in this first triad. Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades were brothers who divided among themselves the common inher-

itance. Such is the myth as given more fully in the Theogony of Hesiod. But though it is plainly found in the background of the Homeric mythology, it is already supplanted by a later trinitarian evolution, namely, the trinity of Zeus, Here, and Athene. Of the older triad only Zeus remains, which means that the Olympian brother, that is, the sky-god, has reduced his rival brothers to a sort of subjection, and has installed himself at the head of the whole pantheon. Zeus is henceforth the "father of gods and men," and supreme over all things. In this second stage of trinitarian movement the naturalistic principle yields to the generative or family idea. The members of the new trinity are all sky-gods, and are united together by the closest family relationship. Here or Hera is both the sister and the wife of Zeus, and hence shares with him his regal supremacy and honors. Athene also is the daughter of Zeus, being doubly related to him, since she is "ἀνδροθέα," that is, a "man-goddess," which means that she was born directly through her father's agency without a mother, — the legend being that she sprang from the head of Zeus. This rather startling myth is only the opposite side, carried to its extreme, of the very common myth or legend, illustrated in many cases, of a parentage from the mother without a father except in some unnatural way. The close connection between Here and Athene is visible all through the Iliad; and their common subordination to Zeus is clearly defined. But the subordination

principle is also carried to the third person of this Homeric trinity. Athene is as much subordinate to Here as Here is to Zeus, and here in this relation of subordination comes already to view the mediative principle which we have found so characteristic of the Ethnic trinitarianism, and which will have a remarkable development in the further progress of Greek thought. In the Iliad, Athene is usually the messenger sent by Zeus or Here on errands of help and mercy. Thus Here sends her to the Grecian host on an embassy of peace, "With thy gentle words restrain thou every man." She is often made a mediator between men and Zeus. Prayers are offered to her by Greek heroes on the eve of battle. Thus Diomede prays: "Rejoice, O goddess, for to thee, first of all the immortals in Olympus, will we call for aid." And so Odysseus: "Harken, goddess, come thou a good helper of my feet." The helpful and gracious character of Athene is thus made conspicuous. Once she is compared to "a mother."

Turning next to the Odyssey, at once we perceive a notable change. Plainly it is a work of later date than the Iliad, and represents a later stage of trinitarian evolution. Zeus remains still at the head of the Homeric trinity, but Here retires into the background, being mentioned but twice, and Athene, who was so subordinate in the Iliad, becomes from the outset the central divine figure of the epic, and remains such to the very end. It is noticeable also that Apollo, who in the Iliad

held the fourth place in the order of the heavenly gods, in the Odyssey rises to the place of Here. He is a son of Zeus, and especially favored by him. Four several times Apollo is united with Zeus and Athene as forming a sort of trinity in adjurations and prayers, as, for example, when Telemachus addressed his mother, Penelope, "Would to Father Zeus, and Athene, and Apollo that the wooers in our halls were even now thus vanquished." The order of the triad we note is also changed. Athene has risen from the third place, which she always held in the Iliad, to the second, and she holds this rank in every adjuration. Thus her very position in the trinity seems to fit her for the mediating mission which she assumes and sustains throughout the poem. It sheds a new and interesting light on the mediatorial character of the second Person of the Christian trinity, when we find the same mediating function joined to the second Person in so many Ethnic triads; for example, Marduk in the Babylonian triad, Vishnu in the Hindoo, Mithra in the Zoroastrian, and Athene in the Greek Homeric.

This chapter in the Greek trinitarianism is so suggestive and important that it demands a somewhat closer study. The Odyssey, as compared with the Iliad, is much fuller of human interest. The Iliad is a true martial epic, enacted on a wide stage, with a grand superhuman machinery at work to carry out the counsels of Zeus, in the midst of the plottings and counter-plottings of

divine, superhuman and human agencies. The Odyssey is no less an epic, but it revolves around a single person, Odysseus, who is the true hero of the poem, and gives it its name. The great theme of the whole action is the adventures of this Greek hero in his efforts to return to his home in spite of the machinations of Poseidon, the ruler of the waves. Thus a personal human interest gathers around the story from the start. But this human element is made still more powerful by the entrance of another person, whose sad fortunes, growing more and more pathetic to the last, form one of the sweetest idyls of all literature — the noble and lovely Penelope, the patiently waiting wife of the long-lost husband. No wonder her story has touched the hearts of men as few others have. In the ruins of Pompeii there still is to be seen, on the walls of a room, in colors as fresh as if painted yesterday, a picture of Ulysses and Penelope when they first met after his return home. He has not yet made himself known to her. Disguised as a beggar, as he was, she plainly struggles in her thoughts and feelings between despair and doubt and growing hope. It is a scene that is entrancing in its simple human realism. The face and attitude of Penelope is one that haunts the spectator ever after.

Yet the true central personage of the Odyssey is neither Ulysses nor Penelope. They are but counters in the divine game which has for its source of interest and meaning the active agency

of the goddess Athene, mediating between heaven and earth, and representing the divine compassion and love in her efforts, crowned at last with triumphant success, to save a sorely tried man from the toils of harsh fate, and restore him to home, wife, son, and happiness. I have spoken of Penelope as perhaps the most attractive woman in Greek literature, but her human picture fades before the sublime form of the "man-goddess" as she plays her part of a divine mediator and messenger and friend of men. Such a story ought not to be given in any abstract, but read in full, to feel its real force and significance; but I will try to set forth its pith, keeping in mind the point of view from which I have approached it.

When the action of the epic begins, Ulysses has been a wanderer for ten years. Penelope is nearly at her wit's end in her devices to postpone a decision concerning the wooers who are wasting her substance and daily becoming more imperious in their wooing. The poem opens with a council of the Olympian gods, in which Athene intercedes with Zeus for Odysseus: "My heart is rent for Odysseus the hapless one, who far from his friends this long while suffereth affliction on a sea-girt isle." The heart of Zeus is touched and he consents to assist his daughter in her mission of rescue. Athene at once descends to Ithaca to stir up Telemachus, Odysseus's son, to attempt to find his father. In this mission she assumes "the semblance of a stranger, Menus, the captain of the

Taphians." This is the first of several assumptions of a human form, or divine incarnations. She next appears as Telemachus himself, going around among the citizens and inciting them to assist him in his quest. Her third appearance is in the form of Mentor, an old friend of Odysseus, and in that form she accompanies Telemachus as his adviser and friend, in his search among his father's comrades for some knowledge of his whereabouts. These incarnations are repeated continually in various ways throughout the poem, and illustrate the directness of Athene's mediatorial agency in her relations with men. She does not remain "in the heavenly places," but breaks the veil between heaven and earth and comes into visible contact with the object of her care, now as a man, now as a woman, anon as a bird. Could the completeness of the divine condescension be more vividly disclosed? One of the most suggestive touches of the Homeric realism is where Athene, in the form of Mentor, accompanying Telemachus to Pylos, the home of Nestor, is invited, as if a mortal man, to take "the cup of honied wine" and offer it in prayer "since all men stand in need of the gods," and herself prays to Poseidon that "Telemachus and I may return when we have accomplished that for which we came hither with our swift black ship." "Now as she prayed on this wise, *herself the while was fulfilling the prayer*." Or is anything more touching than what soon follows, when the aged Nestor, indulging in reminiscences

of the Trojan war, and striving to comfort the young Telemachus concerning the wooers that were "planning mischief within the halls," uttered these words in the very presence of Athene herself: "Ah, if but gray-eyed Athene herself were inclined to love thee, as once she cared exceedingly for the renowned Odysseus in the land of the Trojans where we Achæans were sore afflicted, — for never yet have I seen the gods show forth such love as then did Pallas Athene standing manifest by him, — if she would be pleased so to love thee and to care for thee, then might certain of them clean forget their marriage," all unconsciously declaring what was already true, and soon to be manifested in the wooers' doom.

But now the scene changes. Meanwhile the wooers are becoming more and more clamorous, and the heart of Penelope is growing sadder and more despairing. She prays to Athene, who "hears her prayer," and rushes to her help. This time she "fashions a phantom, after the likeness of a woman," who comes into Penelope's sleepless chamber and cheers her with the assurance that "a friend who hath power, even Pallas Athene, pitieth thee in thy sorrow, and hath sent me forth to speak these words unto thee." And now again the scene changes to Odysseus, himself, who has been detained for eight years by the nymph Calypso, and is vainly sighing to be permitted to continue his voyage home. Athene has instigated Zeus to interfere again in his behalf. Odysseus

once more resumes his course homeward and reaches the shore of Phæacia. On his way to the city of Alcinoüs the king, Athene meets him in the guise of "a young maiden carrying a pitcher," and offers to conduct him to her father's palace. As they walked through the midst of the Phæacian mariners, the goddess "shed a wondrous mist about him, for the favor that she bore him in her heart." The king receives him kindly, and the long story of his ten years' adventures follows. Then Alcinoüs sends him on his way and he is landed on the shores of his own country. Here the last great act may be said to begin. To attempt to describe it would only mar its thrilling beauty and charm. Enough to say that Athene now comes into the foreground more completely than ever and becomes the inspiring mover and conductor of the whole final line of action by which Odysseus is made known to his son and friends, the wooers are vanquished and slaughtered, and Penelope, the constant wife, is restored to her husband's arms and to the old life and joy. Not a single step is taken, not a deed is done, but "by the grace of Athene." The closing scene is full of the divine aspect of mercy. The Ithacans determine to revenge the death of the wooers, and attack Odysseus and his friends, but through strength given by Athene in answer to the prayer of the aged Laertes the attack is repulsed, and all the attacking party would have been slain had not Athene, once more in the

form of Mentor, called aloud: "Hold your hands from fierce fighting, ye men of Ithaca, that ye may be parted quickly without bloodshed." Thus the battle was stayed. The Odyssey closes with these words: "Thereafter Athene set a covenant between them with sacrifice, she, the daughter of Zeus, lord of the ægis, in the likeness of Mentor both in fashion and in voice." It cannot be lost sight of in this sweet cantata of "Peace on earth, good will to men," that Athene, who has wrought this peaceful result and sealed it with a covenant, leaves the scene "in fashion as a man." I know not how this sketch may affect others, but for myself, as I lay down the Odyssey, I do it with the clear conviction that as a religious poem it stands unrivaled in Ethnic literature. Surely its picture of the divine character, as revealed in the Homeric trinity, especially in its two foremost members, is one of marvelous dignity and power, shading continually into an ineffable lovableness and grace. Who the creator of this wonderful poem was cannot be known. It comes to us out of the shadows of the prehistoric world. But the creation itself, in its three chief characters of Odysseus, Penelope, and above all Athene, is in my view *par excellence* the supreme vision of Aryan faith. The Homeric conception of Athene reaches the highest water mark of Greek religious thought. Æschylus and Sophocles may have struck a few deeper and higher notes, but the Odyssey remains the true Greek Bhagavat-Gita, the "Divine Song."

I cannot leave this great religious poem without alluding to one other instructive feature of it, namely, that Athene, the second mediating person of the Homeric trinity, is a woman, thus representing the feminine element in human nature. The introduction of a woman into the central place of mediator in the triad is a new step of evolution in the Ethnic trinitarianism. It will appear later in the Egyptian triad of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, where Isis, the sister and wife of Osiris, will assume a sort of mediatorial rôle, and will become one of the most popular of the foreign divinities in later Roman times. But Isis is only a faded image of Athene. In the Greek "man-goddess," "the eternal womanly" of Goethe's Faust finds its highest expression. If Christ, according to Paul's description of him, apparently drawn from Philo, is "the man from heaven," Athene is "the woman from heaven" as truly. When we seek for the completest expression of that form of mediatorship which manifests itself most clearly and attractively to satisfy our human needs, is it not the form of motherhood? Scripture itself bears us out in this affirmation. The prophet makes God to say that he will comfort us as "one whom his mother comforteth." No figure surely is fuller of the divine love and compassion than this one. One cannot read the Odyssey without being struck with the true motherly character of Athene. Once she is directly compared to "a mother." How mother-like

she broods over Odysseus in all his misfortunes as if he were her own child! And she acts the same part in her relations with Telemachus and Penelope. All through the poem she is always the same sweet, gracious, dearly loving, self-forgetting woman, playing the mother's part, how well! I cannot help regarding this conception of mediatorship in its feminine form as the highest touch of religious faith and feeling, even in the Odyssey itself. There is but one other figure in religious history or literature that can compare with it, that of Mary the mother of Jesus. And is it not remarkable that both Athene and Mary should have received, as a unique cognomen, the same term "παρθένος" or virgin. Athene was the virgin queen, as Mary became the virgin mother. And, from this point of view, is it any wonder that Mary the mother of Jesus, in after times when her son had been elevated in the faith of his followers to a divine rank, should have been transfigured into a hallowed virginity, and even raised to that place of mediatorship and intercessory power and grace which her son had once held? How natural, from a human point of view, it was that as the masculine element of mediation in the second Person of the trinitarian dogma was more and more confounded with that of absolute and supreme deity, the feminine element should be pushed forward in the person of Mary the virgin mother until finally she has become to all Catholic hearts the real mediator between man and God, and the

immediate object of intercessory prayer. Nay, the wonder ceases that in the old historic Catholic Church, represented to-day in the Roman Communion, the mother of Jesus is being recognized as true queen of heaven, enthroned by the side of Christ himself, and that already Catholic theologians are seeking to add a fourth person to the divine trinity. In that new dogma, Goethe's "eternal womanly," imaged in far off ancient times in the Homeric Athene, will have found its true place to all Catholic souls. Nor can the question be avoided what the Protestant position must be. If a divine mediation through a masculine human incarnation be accepted as a revealed truth, why not also a feminine incarnation as well? Does not the one suggest and logically include the other? Certainly all true moral mediation in human experience has a double form, based on the duality that exists in human nature. Fatherhood and brotherhood are not enough. Motherhood and sisterhood must be added to complete the ties which bind all human society. Must not the same be true of the highest form of moral influence and union, namely, that between man and God. Why, then, should not a divine mediatorship appear in fashion as a woman as well as "in fashion like a man?" As a matter of fact the dogmas of the divine Christ and the divinized Mary sprang from the same historical source and rest on the same fundamental moral grounds. Protestants have long since laid aside the dogma

of Mary, as it was developed in Christian tradition, and classed it among the superstitions of the dark ages; but they do not all see that the same historical process which overthrows the faith in Mary as the virgin mother and queen of heaven must overthrow the kindred dogma of Christ's deity.

Before leaving the Greek mythological trinitarianism and passing to the development of the trinitarianism of the Greek philosophy, some space should be devoted to what may be fitly called an appendix to the Greek mythological chapter, namely, some account of the trinitarian elements in the Roman religion. A common Aryan background lies behind the historical accounts of both Greek and Roman religious ideas, and there are some plain indications of a direct influence exercised by Hellenism upon that remarkable prehistoric chapter of Etruscan civilization, both in art and in religion, which in its turn seems to have had much to do in the moulding of the primitive Roman forms of religious faith. In later historic times, when Rome had extended her dominion over the Greek world, and had deeply imbibed the Greek culture, there resulted an amalgamation of the Roman and Greek mythology and polytheism, so that there was a heterogeneous fusion of Latin and Hellenic divinities both in character and in name, and the term Græco-Roman properly covered the whole religious as well as political field. But while all this is true, it is equally true, and to

be distinctly and carefully noted, that the Roman religion as it first appears in history was a completely original and indigenous evolution out of Italian soil. This religion was as characteristically polytheistic as the Greek, but more abstract and less the result of the poetical imagination. Roman mythology had no Homer or even Hesiod to record in imperishable verse its religious flights of fancy. Such genius was clearly wanting to the Roman character. So complete was its polytheistic tendency that, as Mommsen well says: "The number of gods became as great as the incidents of earthly life." The Roman was practical rather than idealistic, and his religion became "shriveled into a dreary round of ceremonies." It is not surprising, then, that in place of a Hesiodic Theogony, or a Homeric Epic, we should have a Roman Calendar, with its meagre record of sacred and secular days and their accompanying festivals, as our chief historical guide to a closer acquaintance with the Roman religion. But as we study this calendar and its history concerning the chief religious festivals that filled the Roman year, while the completely and widely polytheistic character of Roman religious faith is vividly brought out, another fact emerges with equal prominence, namely, that at the official head of the whole polytheistic pantheon there was a triad of gods, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, to whom a special worship was accorded. In fact, the whole Roman religious faith and cult was centred in one spot,

with its temple and ritual, and in one great day and rite. That spot was the Capitoline Hill, on which was built the three-celled temple, with its three altars and images of Jupiter Capitolinus, Juno, and Minerva. These three divinities "constituted the official triad of the Roman religion." They were by eminence the "Dii populi Romani." Special "prayers were addressed to them for the public prosperity." Especially on one great festival day, — the "Dies natalis templi Capitolini," or "Lectisternium," as it was popularly called, from the most striking scene in the pageant, — the images of the three Capitoline divinities were brought out of their several cells, placed on couches and carried about the city, and then feasted together. The origin of this unique religious custom and of the trinitarian feature which chiefly distinguishes it is obscure. Scholars trace its source to the Etruscan kings, who brought to Rome their own religious ideas and worship as well as civilization. The architectural division of the Capitoline temple into three parts, with three special cells, seems to be Etruscan. A curious passage in Servius, a commentator on Virgil of the fourth century, supports this conjecture: "Those wise in the Etruscan discipline say that among the Etruscan builders cities were not considered as truly complete in which three gates were not dedicated, and also as many temples of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva." Fergusson, in his "History of Architecture" (i. 282), gives a plan of an Etruscan

temple which is divided into three parts, a central nave and two aisles, with three corresponding doors, and three cells for the divinities. There is no doubt a direct historical connection between the Roman basilica of Imperial times, with its threefold division, and the Etruscan temple, as there plainly is between the Roman basilica and the early Christian church, with its final development into the Gothic cathedral. It is indeed a curious and noteworthy inference which appears inevitable, if these premises are well founded, namely, that the trinitarian idea really lies behind that threefold principle of division which has been the ruling feature of Græco-Etruscan, Roman, and Christian religious architecture from prehistoric times to the present day. A side view is thus opened of peculiar significance into that tendency of the primitive Aryan man to recognize a trinitarian character in all things, and to give it expression in public and sacred buildings. It is quite well established that the Roman Capitoline trinity was of Etruscan origin, and that the Etruscan religious and artistic ideas were derived from Greece. This explains the correspondence of the Capitoline trinity — Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva — with the Homeric trinity of Zeus, Here, and Athene; for Jupiter is the equivalent of Zeus Pater or Father Zeus, while Juno, though in name merely a feminine counterpart of Jupiter, — being originally Jovina, the feminine of Jove — represents in character and function the Greek Here, and

Minerva is a Latinized Athene, the goddess of wisdom. In Virgil the Capitoline triad has become more fully identified with the Greek. Juno has become the sister-wife of Jupiter, as was Here that of Zeus, and Minerva has taken on more completely the various attributes of Athene, as inventress of the arts and as the friend of mankind. It is a question, however, whether in the original Italian religion these divinities corresponded so closely to their later Greek counterparts, or had such fully developed personal qualities. But such a question need not concern us here. This at least is true, that very early in Roman history, and long before Greece directly influenced Rome, the Capitoline triad and its cult was fully established on that hill which became the hearthstone and religious centre of the Roman commonwealth, and remained ever after the point around which the whole religious system of Roman rites and festivals revolved. After the political union of Rome and Greece was consummated in the second century B. C., the amalgamation of the two religions went on apace. Still, it was never quite complete.

Virgil well represents the Roman religion at the beginning of the empire. Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva in the Æneid are everywhere recognized as the Latin equivalents of Zeus, Here, and Athene. Yet there are marked differences of character, showing that the old Latin ideas persistently held their ground. The Jupiter of Virgil is more just, perhaps, than the Zeus of Homer, but he lacks the

humanness of Zeus which brings him so much nearer to human hearts. This is especially true of Minerva as compared with Athene. In the Æneid she is a wise counselor and helper of men, but she somehow lacks that gracious and tender bearing which makes the Athene of Homer so lovable in the eyes of all whom she approaches to succor and save. The Æneid represents a higher conception of moral law and its predestined consequences, — Jupiter himself being under its fatal power, — but the larger moral freedom of the Greek Homeric theology elevates it to a plane of moral activity and responsibility that certainly more than compensates for its allowance of aberrations from the stricter fatalism of the Virgilian dogma. In the introduction to the translation of the Æneid by Messrs. Lonsdale and Lee a statement is made with which I quite agree: "The author of the 'Christian Year' has said that, next to Sophocles, Virgil is the most religious of the poets of heathenism. The word religious is ambiguous, and it would be difficult to agree with this opinion, if the word religious is taken in its usual sense. But if by religion is meant a belief in fate, then it is quite true that the Æneid is the epic of destiny. We might take as a motto for it Virgil's own line thus rendered by Dryden: —

> 'But ah, what use of valor can be made,
> When heaven's propitious powers refuse their aid?'

No Stoic dissertation can set forth the power of fate more determinately." But if the Æneid is "the

epic of destiny," quite as truly is the Odyssey the epic of moral freedom. Virgil was a true poet of the Augustan era, with all its splendid civilization and culture. His great poem is its noblest epitaph. But Virgil was a child of his age. The Roman world of his day had lost the simple faith of youth, and had fallen into that state of cold doubt and skepticism which may be seen in its best form in the writings of Cicero. The last religious refuge of such an age is the doctrine of fate. It was out of such a fatalistic reaction that the Stoic pantheistic philosophy arose, with its lofty but cheerless ethics of unconditional resignation. Virgil had been educated under Epicurean influences, but in later life his religious sympathies tended toward the conservative reaction set on foot by Augustus. His epic poem is an effort to reinstate the ancient religion among the "doubting Pilates" of his day. In a sense the effort was a splendid success. He painted the mythological polytheism of early Italy, in its later Hellenized form, in colors whose brightness and richness time cannot dim. But after all they were the colors of the sunset, and the Æneid will ever remain the pathetic vision of a dying faith. To attempt to compare such a poem with the Odyssey is really unjust to both. They belong to two utterly different spheres of religious thought. The pessimistic and melancholy temper of the Augustan age is reflected in Virgil himself and in his profoundly sad verse. A sympathetic critic speaks of "his majestic sadness, his grace and pity."

Such in truth is the impression which the Æneid leaves on the reader. From beginning to end it is bathed with the sober hues of a fatalism that broods darkling over all skies. The joyous springtime of the Homeric world, with its evergreen isles and bright many-voiced waves of ocean, has gone forever, and in its place are the melancholy autumnal days of an age that is disillusioned and waits hopelessly for what may come. If the Odyssey is the Bhagavat-Gita or "Divine Song" of the Ethnic Bible, the Æneid is its Book of Ecclesiastes.

CHAPTER VII

THE EVOLUTION OF THE GREEK PHILOSOPHICAL TRINITARIANISM

The Greek mythological age may be said to have ended with the Persian wars at the beginning of the fifth century B. C. These wars were followed by a rapid upward movement of Greek civilization which quickly culminated in its famous golden age, producing the most wonderful outburst of social, literary, artistic, and religious development that the world had yet seen. It was the age of Herodotus, Æschylus, Sophocles, Socrates, Pericles, Thucydides, Xenophon, Phidias, and Polygnotus. What makes it especially noteworthy for us in our present study is the fact that it prepared the way for that remarkable evolution of metaphysical thought which resulted in the philosophical idealism of Plato and Aristotle. It was by these great thinkers, who borrowed their inspiration from Socrates, that the educated Greek world was carried over from the old mythological and polytheistic conception of divinity to that new ground of philosophical theism which became the foundation of all later theologies. A single paragraph from Plato's Timæus (40 Steph.), in which with the most exquisite irony he politely bows out

of existence the old polytheistic gods, may be truly said to mark the epoch-making transition from that theory of divine multiplicity which had hitherto characterized more or less completely all Ethnic thought, to the new conception of God's essential unity, which was henceforth to rule in philosophy. But while Plato was a philosophical theist or monist, he left a way open for the admission of a multiplicity of divine and semi-divine beings in the ideal sphere by his dualistic mediational doctrines. Dualism lay at the basis of Plato's spiritual philosophy. It was essential in his view to the defense of all real spiritual existence that a radical line of division should be drawn between spirit and matter. The earlier Greek philosophers from Thales to Anaxagoras had built their systems on the assumption of an original material monism. Heracleitus indeed started out on a reactionary dualistic path, but failed to follow his own lead. Anaxagoras took a step further, declaring that behind motion in the phenomenal world there must be a mover, but left his pregnant suggestion without critical analysis. It was reserved for Socrates and Plato, his great disciple, to subject this suggestive hint of Anaxagoras to critical dialectic treatment, out of which came the idealistic dualism of Plato and his school. This doctrine rests on the assumption that there is a radical and eternal distinction in fact as well as in thought between the ideal or spiritual sphere and the phenomenal or material. This dualistic view is modified by an-

other assumption, namely, that the ideal world is the truly *real*, and is the pattern and cause of all temporal and phenomenal things ; so that duality is but a development in time of an original unity above time. It is noticeable here that the radical line of cleavage is between spirit and matter, or between the eternal and the temporal. Man, as a creature with a body, belongs to the material and temporal. Hence he is naturally separated from God and the heavenly realm. Now appears the ground for Plato's mediation ideas. How can God be brought into moral relation with men? For Plato believes in the divine personal goodness and disposition to care for his human creatures. But God himself "cannot mix with men." Thus a mediative system is needed, and such a system of mediating instrumentalities forms a leading feature of Plato's philosophy. This system begins in the very process of creation itself by which the material world is brought into being. In the Timæus, which contains Plato's cosmogony, three principles or classes of natures are described: 1. Intelligible or ideal being which is uncreated and eternal. 2. The generated imitation or copy of ideal being, that is, phenomena or the created world. 3. Matter, which with Plato is without positive qualities, and means simply space viewed as the receptacle or "nurse of generation." It is by the union of the first and third principles, namely, eternal ideas and infinite space or matter, that the phenomenal world is generated or pro-

duced. How can this be done? Here the necessity of the mediating element is seen. This principle of mediation on which all creation depends is called by Plato soul (ψυχή). Soul is itself a preliminary creation of God, which Plato conceives as a sort of mixture of idea and space, or rather perhaps an emanation from the divine mind (νοῦς) which under spatial or material conditions becomes personalized into a mediating being who thus is made the agent in the production of the world. This curious piece of pure speculation shows to what shifts Plato was driven by his dualistic theory. Mediation is its necessary corollary, and this principle of union and communication between the upper and lower worlds is steadily employed throughout his metaphysical writings. He has a system of demonology which forms a sort of mediating bridge between heaven and earth. These demons, or good angels, are the bearers of communications from one side to the other. Through them prayers are carried up to God, and divine responses are given to men. Even nature is introduced into this mediating system. Hence such oracles as that at Delphi, where priestesses were inspired by vapors issuing from a cave. Plato's doctrine of divine inspiration, in which he seems to have implicitly believed, was founded upon the mediative principle. Here, then, in the very nature of the Platonic philosophy, a foundation was laid for a trinitarian development. In fact, no such development was clearly visible in Plato himself.

The signs of it which some Christian writers, like Cudworth, have found, belong to dialogues that are now known to be spurious. But a germ lay concealed there which later Platonists were sure to bring to light. Plato was no trinitarian in the full sense of the word; he had no trinity of gods; he was a strict monotheist. But his mediation theory, so fundamental in his dualism, was a direct pointer, as we have seen so often in other Ethnic religions, to a trinitarian result. Out of it came at last the famous logos (λόγος) doctrine which has played so prominent a part in Christian theology.

I have already briefly discussed this logos doctrine in its rise and evolution in pre-Christian thought, in my previous volume on the "Evolution of Trinitarianism;" but it is now necessary that it should receive a more extended treatment, in order that one may fully understand the historical background of the later New Platonic trinity of which Plotinus was the great expounder. The term λόγος was ordinarily employed in classic Greek in the sense of reason or the faculty of intelligence, and also for the expression of reason and thought in language, namely, word or speech. The first is its constant meaning in Greek philosophy, and such is its significance in the logos doctrine. It was an unfortunate error in the Vulgate Latin version of the New Testament that the Greek term λόγος in the proem of the Fourth Gospel, which was plainly used in its philosophical sense, and should have been translated by the Latin equivalent *ratio*, was

translated by the term *verbum*, which fails wholly to give its real meaning. This blunder was perpetuated in the King James English version, and a strange spirit of reverence has led recent scholars to adhere to this error in the new revised version. The true translation is: "In the beginning was the reason or intelligence of God." Such was its meaning as used by Plato, and by Greek philosophers before and after him. With this meaning it came to be employed for such forms or fruits of intelligence as law, order, especially the divine law or order of things. Such was its use by Heracleitus, who may be said to have introduced the word into philosophical language. Whether Heracleitus ever gave to λόγος a personal meaning is not clear. My own impression is against it. Heracleitus scarcely rose to any full philosophical conception of a personal God, or of a reason of God. By reason (λόγος) he meant the principle of eternal order and law which he found behind all the changes and movements of the material world. Even Plato's use of it is not personal as a rule; it is only an attribute of personality. His more usual term for the divine intelligence is νοῦς (mind), which he sometimes substitutes for θεός (God), since the divine intelligence is the essential interior principle of the Divine Being. Plato, however, frequently used the term λόγος (reason) as the equivalent of νοῦς (mind). In the later Platonic school the two terms came to be used synonymously, and finally the three terms, θεός, νοῦς, λόγος, were

all employed to mean the Divine Being in his essential eternal character. The term in Plato for the mediating principle is never νοῦς or λόγος, but ψυχή, namely, the world soul, which became the author of all other individual souls and mediated between them and God. A sort of semblance of trinity might be suggested as existing in Plato, in his use of θεός, νοῦς, and ψυχή; but what has been said shows that Plato had no such idea in his mind. He made no personal distinction between θεός, νοῦς, and λόγος, and his world soul (ψυχή) was not an eternal divine being, but a created mediating being whom God made to be the connecting link between himself and created things, or, in more philosophical language, between idea and phenomena.

How, then, came the logos doctrine of later Greek philosophy with its trinitarian appendix to be traced to Plato? The answer to this must be found in one of those common evolutions of language by which words gather new meanings and even change places with other words, — a linguistic process due attention to which would have saved Christian theologians from not a few mistakes. The evolution began in the gradual substitution of λόγος for νοῦς as the divine reason or intelligence. This change appears prominently in Philo, — the famous Jew of Alexandria, — and also in the early Christian Alexandrian philosophers, especially the Gnostics; and through such channels it went into Christian theology. It is in this form that it appears in the Fourth Gospel.

Along with this linguistic evolution went another, namely, the substitution of λόγος for ψυχή, as the great Platonic principle of mediation. Λόγος, as has been said, was never used by Plato to represent the mediation element. Ψυχή was his philosophical word always for such mediation. In his more popular dialogues he sometimes substitutes such terms as δαίμων or ἔρος, but these personifications are drawn from the mythological vocabulary of his age. Here, again, Philo is the principal medium of evolution between Plato and later times. Philo substituted λόγος for ψυχή as the central principle of mediation between God, the transcendent ineffable One, and his creatures. In fact, the λόγος of Philo is the strict counterpart, on the mediational side, of the ψυχή of Plato. On another side a clear difference is to be observed, but this difference is to be explained by the fact that Philo has left the strict theistic position of Plato and anticipates the monistic evolution which will culminate in the pantheism of Plotinus. It can now be easily seen how the λόγος mediation doctrine can be traced through the evolution of the Platonic dualistic philosophy back to Plato himself, although he did not use the term λόγος, but ψυχή, for his mediating principle. On the whole, it may be said that Philo is the historical founder of the λόγος theology. He placed the λόγος as the great principle of divine mediation in the forefront of his philosophical system, and introduced the word μεσίτης (mediator) into theological language.

To the Philonic school Paul plainly owed his own use of this term, which became the keynote of his mediating system. The same is true of the unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The remarkable proem of the Fourth Gospel ceases to be so remarkable when its historical source is thus discovered. How the dogma afterwards took shape in Christian theological thought and finally resulted in the complete trinitarianism of the Nicene Creed my previous book unfolds. The very centre and heart of that creed is its λόγος mediation doctrine, and history shows that this doctrine has its source in, and is directly evolved out of, the Platonic philosophy.

But even in Philo we have not yet reached a philosophical trinity. Philo is religiously a true Jew, and still holds to one personal God. Yet his λόγος as mediator (μεσίτης) has already assumed a prominence that threatens to make God abdicate his old throne as the direct Father and Savior of his chosen people. The λόγος has become the messenger, the high priest, "the man from heaven," the "first begotten son," the medium of prayer and offering, the friend of man. No such doctrine is to be found in the Old Testament. There God himself directly approaches men and deals with them as their own heavenly Father and Redeemer. Whence, then, did Philo, true Jew as he was, gather his mediation ideas and foist them into his interpretation of the Old Testament writings? The answer has been already given. A Jew in

religious faith, Philo was educated in Greek schools, where he had drunk deeply of the Platonic philosophy. But if no trinity yet emerges in Philo, two things only are wanting to bring about such a result. 1. That his "reason" (λόγος) or "mediator" (μεσίτης) should become a strict person; and 2. that a third being should be added. As to the first point, already in Philo himself there is a remarkable wavering between a personal and impersonal "reason," so that there is great diversity of opinion among scholars as to which view should be taken. To me this question has no special interest. Philo's half-personal, half-impersonal use of "reason" (λόγος) is simply an evidence of the wavering and hesitancy that appears throughout his writings, indicating the half-unconscious drift of his thought from theism to pantheism, or from the personal to the impersonal view of divinity. But so strongly personal at times is his language in reference to the mediator that Christian writers such as Paul, the writer to the Hebrews, the author of the Fourth Gospel, Origen and his school, were easily led to regard it as denoting a personal mediating being. Thus the foundation is already laid in the Platonic Philo for a second person in the Godhead, and when later the doctrine of a third person, the Holy Spirit, began to grow in the Christian church, it was not difficult to find the germs of it in Philo himself as well as in the Old Testament.

If Philo was in a sense the founder of the λόγος

doctrine, which by a curious fate became transplanted into Christian theology, and paved the way for the Christian trinity, it was Plutarch who more truly formed the historical bridge between the older and newer Platonism, and prepares us for the final evolution which will give us the full-fledged New Platonic trinity of Plotinus.

With Plutarch we reënter the direct line of evolution of Platonism, — Philo representing a side line which has become famous because of its unique influence upon Christianity. Before directly taking up this last chapter of the Greek philosophical trinity, it will be well to notice its peculiar character in general, which consists in the fact that it rests entirely on a speculative basis, and allows no strictly mythological element to enter in to qualify or corrupt it. As we have already seen, Plato eliminated from his metaphysical scheme all fabulous materials. He sometimes illustrated his doctrines by myths and polytheistic traditions, but these were mostly a mere literary garniture; and if he seemed to accept them as containing something of truth, he held them loosely as remaining shreds of his traditional faith, not as constituent elements of his metaphysical speculations. This character which was given to Platonism at the start was preserved to the end. It is owing to this cardinal fact that the later Greek philosophical trinity as finally set forth by Plotinus will be the most logically consistent and completely speculative piece of metaphysical con-

struction that has ever appeared in the world. When it is compared with the two other Aryan trinities, the difference from this point of view will be readily seen. Zoroastrianism from beginning to end is full of mythological elements. It is hardly known whether Zoroaster himself was a historical or a mythical character. Sosiosh, the Zoroastrian "savior," was a complete myth, and Mithra, the "mediator," was originally a mythological divinity of the prehistoric polytheism. The only philosophical rival of the Plotinian trinity is the Hindoo *Trimurti*. But though this trinity becomes as plainly metaphysical and pantheistic as that of Plotinus himself, its whole historical basis is laid in the earlier mythology, and the very names of its triune members are those of mythological gods who had done duty in the earlier polytheistic cult. But this fact will find its best illustration in the analysis I shall give of the Plotinian trinity; and I refer to it now that it may be kept clearly in view as we pass on to trace the historical evolution which culminated in Plotinus.

Plutarch lived in the first century of the Christian era. There is no evidence in his writings of any acquaintance with Christianity. He called himself a Platonist, but he represents the philosophic current of his age which was moving strongly towards a monistic view of the world. This movement had its chief philosophical exponent in Stoicism, and Plutarch, while opposing the Stoics at different points, shows how much he was influenced

by the pantheistic atmosphere around him. The ruling feature of Plutarch's Platonism is its mediation system. Mediation is his one solvent for every philosophical dilemma. It was this mediation principle in Plato's dualism that made Plutarch a Platonist. But his treatment of this principle is original and peculiar. Plato had introduced mediating elements to bridge over partially the great chasm that existed between his two orders of being, the ideal and the phenomenal. But the chasm still remained. With Plutarch the real chasm no longer exists. The mediating powers have completely filled it. Dualism has become monism. The new philosophic key, used also by the Stoics, is evolution. The creation in time of Plato has given place to an evolution from eternity, and this evolution has no gaps in its progress from the original first principle of existence to the lowest form of matter. This, of course, is what we call *New* Platonism, and its path is straight henceforth to its extreme result in Plotinus. Yet Plotinus, as well as Plutarch, called himself a follower of Plato, because starting with Plato's idealism he, with Plutarch, adopted to its fullest extent the associated principle of mediation. The three test words of New Platonism, as a philosophy, are *idealism*, *mediation*, *evolution*. The first two belong to Plato himself, while the third is the new note which changed Platonism into New Platonism. This change was radical; for the new evolution principle led to a magnify-

ing of the mediation principle, which metamorphosed the dualism that lies at the foundation of theism to a monism which is the direct road to pantheism. How far Plutarch was aware of this profound change one cannot tell. He gives no sign. But his work entitled "Isis and Osiris"[1] is interesting as showing how ready he was to accept a trinity, such as he found in the Egyptian religion of his day, from the standpoint of the Platonic dualism. The "Isis and Osiris" gives evidence that Plutarch found in Platonism a sort of a trinity. But how? one may well ask. I can conceive of but one answer, from the philosophic point of view. It was the new evolution keynote that enabled Plutarch to accept so easily the idea of a trinity of gods, thus forming a convenient bridge between the original *One*, the Father of Plato, and the many mediational divine and semi-divine beings which filled the chasm between the two worlds of eternity and time. We shall find this very bridge employed by Plotinus in the remarkable chapter of the "Enneads," entitled "The Three Hypostases" (Οι τρεῖς ὑπόστασεις).

The "Isis and Osiris" of Plutarch is so curious and suggestive, as a stage in the evolution of Greek trinitarian ideas, that it demands further notice. This work is an attempt from the media-

[1] I assume the genuineness of this production; for, whether genuine or not, it harmonizes with the general tone and character of Plutarch's genuine writings, and, if not from the hand of Plutarch himself, must be the work of a disciple.

tional and eclectic point of view to explain the Egyptian polytheism. Plutarch assumed that all religions are essentially one in spirit and aim, and that a common truth underlies all the diversified forms of religious faith. This eclectic liberalism had its root in the original spirit and philosophy of Plato, — a spirit drawn from the inquisitive and critical method of Socrates, — but it grew more and more into a vital principle of judgment and conduct with the evolution of Platonism into New Platonism, which sought to find in philosophy a common ground of agreement and harmony for the divergent religious systems in the world. This irenic, tolerant element characterized the later New Platonic writings, and is the secret of their undying charm, — a charm that sheds a halo around the writings of Plutarch himself, and has placed him in the calendar of pre-Christian saints.

The subject-matter of the "Isis and Osiris" is a myth concerning three Egyptian gods which had become popular in the later religion of Egypt, and also among the Romans who were inclined in Plutarch's day to accept foreign cults, — Egypt being now a Roman province. As a Platonist Plutarch seeks to find the esoteric truth which this exoteric myth contains. The warp and woof of the essay is a comparison which is instituted between the triple myth of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, and the three fundamental principles of Platonism. Thus the basis is laid for a philosophical triad, which Plutarch discovers under the disguise of the Egyptian poly-

theism. It is interesting to observe how ready Plutarch is to accept a trinitarian view of things. "The better and more divine nature," he says, "is made up of *three* principles;" "and we may conjecture that the Egyptians reverence the most beautiful kind of triangle (the right-angled), because they liken it to the nature of the universe." He proceeds to call *three* the "perfect" number. He suggests that in Hesiod's Theogony "the first five elements of creation" are reducible to *three*, and this recalls to him "the fable of Plato's which Socrates has related in the Symposium," in which three persons, Wealth, Poverty, and Love, figure. Thus Plutarch brings Hesiod, Plato, and the Egyptian myth into philosophical harmony by means of a trinity which he finds in the very nature of things, — a passage which reminds one of the extract from Aristotle previously quoted, in which he describes a principle of threeness in nature, and suggests that it lies behind the trinitarian rites in the worship of the gods. Plutarch was thus prepared from his own philosophic background to employ a trinitarian key in the interpretation of the Egyptian polytheism. Such a key is for him the best bridge from unity to multiplicity and *vice versa;* and the same philosophical assumptions, I may here say, which induced Plutarch to build such a trinitarian bridge, lie behind all the philosophical trinities of history. Let me now describe this bridge as Plutarch built it.

The Egyptian myth included a fourth god, Ty-

phon, who represented the evil principle. Plutarch here applies the Platonic dualism, and treats the Egyptian Typhon as equivalent to the Platonic principle of matter, which is the spring of whatever is defective and evil in the world. It is to be noted, however, that Plutarch goes beyond Plato, — becoming almost if not quite a Zoroastrian. Plato's matter was wholly negative in character. For him there is only one positive principle of life and being, namely, the good. But Plutarch seems to hold to two eternal active principles, one good, the other evil, and refers to Zoroaster as holding the same view. In this Plutarch leaves the track of his master. Probably the explanation is to be found in the character of Typhon, as given in the Egyptian myth, which made him an active agent for evil. But in explaining the rest of the myth Plutarch returns to thoroughly Platonic ground. Osiris, Isis, and Horus represent the trinal character of "the better and more divine nature." Plutarch plainly supposed himself to be simply following out Plato's own principles, for he speaks of Plato in this connection as "adopting into his system chiefly the religious notions of the Egyptians." Whether Plato actually borrowed from the Egyptians or not, Plutarch plainly thought so, and accordingly regarded his own trinitarian interpretation of the Osiris myth as a genuine product of Platonic principles. It is not necessary to our purpose to go at length into Plutarch's curious adaptation of the Platonic philosophy to the Egyp-

tian mythology. A simple statement of it will be enough to show how far advanced already we are on the philosophical trinitarian road towards the complete New Platonism of Plotinus, and that the root and seed of it all is traceable to Plato himself.

Plutarch makes Osiris the superior principle of good, the eternal reason or intelligence (λόγος), the fountain head of all intelligence in all things, and the final as well as efficient cause of the world. As such Osiris corresponds to Plato's Zeus or Father, "idea of the good," the "intelligible One." Hence Plutarch calls Osiris "the first god," also "the benefactor." Isis is made the second or female principle, being passive, receptive, the mediating instrument of generation. Hence she is called the wife of Osiris, being the medium of the active agency of the first god or λόγος, and so termed "nurse" and "mother." Here Isis is made to correspond to the Platonic principle of matter as a purely passive, negative element, and not a direct, efficient cause of evil. Horus represents the result of the united action of the first and second gods. He is thus the son of Osiris and Isis, made in his Father's image, son of the λόγος, the sensible image of the intelligible being or idea of good. In this view Horus represents Plato's phenomenal world, which was created or generated from the divine or eternal reason, by the mediation of the world soul, which was a prior creation of that reason (νοῦς, λόγος). It can be seen at once

that Plutarch leaves out of his comparison of the Platonic and Egyptian trinitarianism the world soul or mediating principle, which plays so large a part in Plato's system, and, further, confounds the negative material element of Plato with Typhon, the active agent of evil in the Egyptian myth. He seeks to cover these gaps by his doctrine of Isis, who is made to represent Plato's matter, the passive nurse of generation, and also his "world soul," or active mediating principle. Isis thus has an active as well as passive aspect, is mother as well as wife, the active soul (ψυχή) as well as medium and "nurse" of the generating activity of the first god (νοῦς, λόγος). The result of this skillful manipulation is that he is able to bring the three principles of existence of Plato, namely, 1. Intelligible being or idea, 2. Phenomena or individual things, 3. Matter or space as the receptacle or nurse of generation, into apparent harmony with these three mythical beings, Osiris, Isis, and Horus. How far he was successful in his interpretation does not here concern us: the point of interest is that in his interpretation Plutarch gives us his construction of Platonism, which in his view has a trinitarian basis, and is in essential philosophical accord with the Egyptian triad as philosophically explained.

As to the character of this trinity which Plutarch finds in the Platonic philosophy and the Egyptian religion, it is to be remarked that it differs considerably from the mythological triads of

the earlier Ethnic religions. Had Plutarch treated the myth of Osiris, Isis, and Horus in a historical and critical way, he would have found many interesting points of relationship between it and the mythological triads of his Græco-Roman ancestors. The Osiris of Egypt is the Zeus of Homer in one aspect. So Isis closely corresponds in some of her attributes to Athene. But Plutarch did not approach the subject as a critical historian. His standpoint was that of a philosophical eclectic, and his consequent effort to harmonize an Egyptian myth with a Greek speculation must be accounted a failure. It failed to do justice to either side. Plutarch's triad has no real affinity with the Egyptian mythological trinity, and is equally a spurious development of the Platonic dualism. As I have said, Plato was no trinitarian. His construction of deity was wholly theistic without a tinge of real tritheism. His philosophical dualism led him to his doctrine of three ultimate principles of existence; but his dualism left his theistic doctrine of God untouched. If any question could arise, it would be whether his dualism did not involve pantheism, not whether it led to tritheism. The historical significance of Plutarch's "Isis and Osiris" is, that it so clearly shows which way the theological winds around him were blowing. A trinitarian theory of the universe and also of deity is somehow in the air, and Plutarch takes kindly to it. He is ready to mould his Platonism into a trinitarian form, and the Egyptian myth just suits

his purpose. But why is he so ready to turn his own philosophy into a trinitarian direction? Because his Platonism, as I have shown, has admitted a new evolution principle which has radically transformed it, and a trinity of some sort is the very bridge he needs as a passageway from the unity of original being to the multiplicity of the phenomenal world. In the history of Greek philosophy Plutarch stands midway between Plato and Plotinus. He opened the path from theism to pantheism, which Plato hesitated to enter, but which Plotinus carried through to its logical result, employing the philosophical materials furnished by Plato himself. Plato had never adjusted his theistic faith to his idealistic, dualistic philosophy. If he was conscious of the contradiction which existed he gives no hint of any such consciousness. He could leave this hiatus the more easily since he made no pretense of forming a philosophical system. His dialogues contain other similar speculative inconsistencies, which were only partially hidden under the veil of irony in which he so often indulged, on purpose, apparently, to afford a suitable hiding-place whenever he needed it. Thus it became the great aim of Plato's disciples to systematize the fruitful but unadjusted speculations of their master. It was this motive that developed the New Platonic evolution. From Plato to Plotinus this effort is the sovereign note everywhere visible. It does not come within the scope of this survey to trace this

evolution any further than is required by the trinitarian factor which so essentially belongs to it. Enough to note here that only one of two courses was open to Plato's disciples, — either to surrender the Platonic metaphysical idealism and fall back on a crude dualism as the basis of the Platonic theism, or to surrender Plato's theism altogether and to allow his metaphysical ideal theories to run their logical course into a consistent pantheism. The latter alternative was the one accepted. Thus the further history of Platonism is marked by the steps taken in this direction. Plato's metaphysical speculations were made the basis of further speculative thought, while his theism gradually dwindled to a mythological metaphor, — theistic terms being employed with a pantheistic meaning. Two steps especially are to be noted in this pantheistic advance.

First, Plato treated God as a personal being, the Creator and Father of the world, representing him, however, in his ideal theory as the "idea of the good." But how can an idea, which is a pure abstraction, be a person or a self-conscious agent? Plato left the knot as he found it; but his followers avoided the dilemma by a logical step which eliminated it. Behind Plato's concrete personal mind (*νοῦς* or *λόγος*) the New Platonist placed the abstraction of simple existence (*τὸ ἓν, τὸ ὄν*), — a purely logical formula, without attributes or qualities, and possessing nothing but a subjective reality; for how can an abstract idea exist except

in a concrete mind endowed with the power of abstraction? But such a logical starting-point of being suited the speculative tendencies of this profoundly metaphysical age. Moreover, the basis of it had been laid by Plato himself. In his "Republic" Plato had described the "idea of the good" as the "universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent and lord of light in this world, and the source of truth and reason in the other" (Rep. 517), thus plainly identifying the "idea of the good" with God himself; and yet in another passage (509, B.), he had described this same "idea of the good" as "above all essential or individual being" (τὸ ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας). This isolated expression, which Plato had casually dropped from his pen without explanation or repetition, became the New Platonic definition of the highest or first deity. Evolution of a pantheistic sort, as we have already seen, explained the rest. Plotinus, as we shall see, made great use of this definition. His first hypostasis (ὑπόστασις) or principle of being is a pure impersonal abstraction, "the one" (τὸ ἕν), a simple principle of unity without a single quality of any sort; yet he again and again calls this abstraction God or Father, and, in describing it, uses the personal pronoun in the masculine gender. Unless this peculiarity of Plotinian nomenclature is borne in mind, the reader of the Enneads will often be led astray.

The second step grew out of the question whether the eternal ideas of Plato's metaphysical

world were interior to the divine reason or exterior and independent. I am aware of the opposing views entertained by critics concerning this vexed question which lies at the very root of the Platonic philosophy: but the more thoroughly one enters into Plato's point of view, the clearer grows one's conviction as to his real position, and what the study of Plato's dialogues plainly indicates is amply sustained by the later Platonic evolution. The key to that evolution is to be found only in the right understanding of Plato's own doctrine of ideas, which was incontestably, that they are not apart from and independent of God, but are interior to the divine reason (νοῦς or λόγος), and are employed by God as the patterns and causes of all phenomena. This is the doctrine of the Republic, where Plato made the "idea of the good," which he placed at the summit of the ideal world, to be identical with God himself. So, also, in the Timæus, God the father and creator forms all things after the pattern of the eternal ideas contained in his own reason (λόγος). But New Platonism tended to the opposite view. As it reduced the first absolute God to mere *oneness* without attributes, it could not look upon the ideas which were the types and causes of things as inhering in this first God. The world of ideas was located in the mind of a *second* God, who was himself the principle of intelligence (νοῦς) generated by a natural evolution from the first God.

These two steps led the way to the fully devel-

oped New Platonic trinity. This trinity first appears in a crude shape in Numenius. Numenius was a philosophical writer of the latter half of the second century, and thus stands midway in time between Plutarch and Plotinus. He claimed to be a regenerator of philosophy, and sought to return to the pure fountains of Pythagoras and Plato. In Socrates and Plato he thought that he found a real divine trinity. This trinity he described as "three gods," — a "first god," who was the absolute one (νοῦς), self-conscious yet unable to create or actively employ the ideas that inhered in the divine intelligence; a "second god," who by generation from the first god became the active embodiment of the eternal ideas and the *Demiurge* or maker of the world; and the "third god," who was generated from the second god, and was the active intelligent principle of the created world. Thus we have for the trinity of Numenius, 1, the Supreme Deity; 2, the Demiurge; 3, the Cosmos or world. It will be seen that this view of the principles of the divine being differs considerably from that of Plato. Plato did not distinguish the Demiurge or Creator from the Supreme God. His strict theism prevented it. He treated the eternal ideas which were the patterns and causes of things as immanent in the divine being, and actively operative in the divine mind in the construction of the material universe. How Numenius could have read his evolutionary pantheistic ideas into Plato it is impossible to guess, as but a few fragments

of his writings have come down to us. He may have seen a spurious "Epistle" which was attributed to Plato and contained a passage that distinguished a "first," "second," and "third" god. This spurious epistle was plainly the work of some New Platonic disciple. Whatever be the truth about this, one fact becomes more and more clear, that the whole Platonic school, from Plutarch on, was drifting steadily toward a trinitarian pantheism. The special significance of Numenius lies in the fact that he pushed the trinitarian element to the front, and thus directly prepared the way for the Plotinian trinity.

A word or two more is required concerning the speculations of Numenius, that the connection between him and Plotinus may be more clear. The most marked peculiarity of the Numenian trinity is its generation doctrine. Numenius calls his three gods, πάππος, ἔκγονος, and ἀπόγονος, — literally "grandfather, immediate offspring, and more remote offspring," or, as it might be put, "Father, son, and grandson." Thus the whole evolution of the world is regarded as a generative process from beginning to end. We have seen the generative principle playing an important part in the Ethnic mythological trinities. We also found it early in the development of Platonism into New Platonism, though not in Plato himself. Plato makes God an active creator, not a passive instrument of generation. But the generative idea appears in Philo in his λόγος doctrine, and still more fully in Plutarch,

who makes the third member of the triad the generated son of the first and second members. It was reserved, however, for Numenius to apply the generative principle to the whole trinity, and to make the Supreme Being father of the second god, the Demiurge, and grandfather of the third god, the world. We shall see how completely Plotinus accepted this fertile suggestion.

There is one other point in Numenius's scheme which demands a word of explanation. What does Numenius mean in calling the world a god, and a member of the divine trinity? Of course his pantheism explains it in part. In his view the whole universe, from the highest to the lowest forms of existence, is one substance, and contains one essential divinity. But a further word should be added. Numenius derived from Plato the idea that not only what we call the material world, with its earth, sun, moon, and stars, was an animated being as a whole, but also that each individual body, earth, sun, or star, was an animal or living intelligent being, deriving its animated life from the world-soul, which dwelt in the universe as the soul of man dwells in his body. How fruitful a germ of pantheistic tendencies this theory was needs no unfolding. The truth is that Plato's idealistic dualism was a seed-bed of the most diverse philosophical tendencies. His doctrine of nature was both idealistic and hylozoistic. Aristotle, in this respect, was a consistent disciple, and

hence we shall see in our further studies how philosophical schools of the most antagonistic character can claim these two great founders of Greek speculative thought as their masters. We now pass to Plotinus.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREEK PLOTINIAN TRINITY

THERE is a close historical connection between Plotinus and Numenius. Porphyry, Plotinus's disciple, tells us that the writings of Numenius were among those that were read in the school of Plotinus for discussion and criticism; but he takes pains to add that Plotinus was not a mere follower of Numenius, but developed a "more accurate" philosophy. This is plain at a glance. The differences between Plotinus and Numenius are palpable and radical, and show that Plotinus proceeded upon entirely original lines of philosophic thought. Two points are sufficient to illustrate this. First, Numenius made the Demiurge or world-maker the second principle or member of his trinity; while Plotinus transfers the work of the Demiurge to the third principle of the triad. A second point of difference is still more radical. Numenius made the Cosmos or world a member of his trinity, — a rude device, showing how chaotic and incomplete was his trinitarianism, and how far he failed to understand the idealistic dualism of Plato, whom he regarded as his forerunner. It was Plotinus who revived the central truth of

Platonism and raised upon it a speculative metaphysic in which the spiritual world as the eternally real is carefully distinguished from the phenomenal. This fact is revealed in his new trinity, from which the Cosmos or visible universe is discarded, and in its place a new spiritual principle is substituted. On the whole, it is evident that Plotinus was under no special obligations to any of his predecessors, except so far as this, that he was a wide student of Greek philosophy on all sides, having spent his early life in Alexandria, the headquarters of all the Greek schools in the third century. The two philosophers who most influenced him were Plato and Aristotle. His references to Plato are numerous, and he plainly regarded him as his philosophical master. How far he was conscious of his wide variations from Plato it is not easy to say. My own judgment is that he regarded himself as a true follower of Plato, but exercised freely the functions of a critic, and looked upon his own philosophical system as a legitimate and logical unfolding of Plato's speculations. In fact, as has already been mentioned, while he adhered to the spiritualistic idealism of Plato, he dismissed entirely the Platonic element of personality as fundamental to the spiritual realm, and built the most complete metaphysical system of idealistic pantheism that the world has seen. The influence of Aristotle upon Plotinus is also marked. His chief deviations from Plato are on Aristotelian lines, especially his whole theory of

the origin of the world as an evolution of phenomenal movements and activities, which involve an unmoved and motionless mover or principle of motion. Plato made God an active causal agent in the formation of the world, which had a beginning; while Aristotle held that the world must be eternal, since the principle of all motion must be eternal, and so eternally productive of motion in the physical universe. Plotinus accepted the view of Aristotle, and made it the basis of his trinitarianism. But while Plotinus shows a thorough acquaintance with all the great thinkers before him in the Greek world, and even adopts many of their ideas, it still remains true that his philosophical system is essentially original. This is preeminently true of his trinitarianism.

Before I proceed to a description of the Plotinian trinity, I wish to emphasize this fact, so that the profound significance of Plotinus as a religious thinker, and of his religious system as compared with other systems, may be duly impressed on the minds of my readers. Of no other trinitarian system can it be said that it is the creation of a single religious genius. All other Ethnic trinities, as we have seen, were the slow result of a long evolution, and their origins are hid in the darkness of the primeval world, out of which they finally emerged into the light of historical times. Neither Zoroaster nor Buddha nor any single Hindoo sage laid the foundations of the Zoroastrian or Hindoo triads. The Greek mythological trinity which

forms so tender a background to the story of the Odyssey had floated down into the Homeric world from an unknown past. Plato was, on the whole, the most creative trinitarian thinker before Plotinus, and sowed the speculative seed which finally produced the Plotinian trinity. But Plato himself was not a trinitarian in any sense. He was a monotheist; and before a trinity could emerge from his theistic philosophy, the whole character of it had to be changed. I have already traced that change through Philo, Plutarch, and Numenius. Not till the Platonic monotheism had become a New Platonic pantheism could a metaphysical trinity be built on Platonic foundations. This was the truly original work of Plotinus. It is a historical fact worthy of careful attention and remembrance, that the two great philosophical trinities of the ancient world, the Hindoo and the New Platonic, are essentially pantheistic, and could have been developed only from pantheistic principles. Two words describe the essence of Plotinianism, pantheism and trinitarianism, and in the Plotinian system each element involves the other. It is indeed true that Plotinus does not baldly assert his pantheistic ideas, though they lie at the basis of all his thinking; but he places his trinity in the forefront of his philosophy, and makes his three hypostases or principles of being the root and centre of his whole explanation of the universe, including man in his origin, character, and destiny, and also nature from the highest to the lowest forms

of phenomenal existence. What establishes and stamps as genuine the originality of this wonderful system, viewed simply as a product of speculative thought, is its completely metaphysical and transcendental character. Every trinity before that of Plotinus has mythological, legendary, or historical elements incorporated more or less completely in its composition. Even philosophers like Heracleitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and Plato himself, frequently fell back on mythological ideas in order to bridge the speculative gaps in their thought. But no such "wood, hay, stubble" are mixed with the pure metaphysics of Plotinus. His "three hypostases," The One, The Mind, The Soul (τὸ ἕν, ὁ νοῦς, ἡ ψυχή), are in no sense mythological and have no mythological background; they are wholly transcendental creations of the speculative reason, — the result of the sublimest flights of abstract thought, dealing with the great mysteries of the world and man and God. Hence, although the mediative principle drawn from Plato is conspicuous in the Plotinian trinity, it remains wholly transcendental, never lowering itself to the point of a divine incarnation. There is nothing in Plotinus to remind one of the God-man, Krishna, in the Hindoo trinity, or Sosiosh or Mithra in Zoroastrianism, or the Virgin Athene of Greek mythology. This fact grows the more remarkable, when one considers that all the historical elements that have entered into the development of the various Ethnic trinities appear in the Plotinian, namely,

the peculiar significance of *three*, the family or generative principle, and the mediation principle. Why, then, we may well ask, did Plotinus leave out the natural idea of a divine incarnation? The answer becomes plain only when the character of Plotinus himself and of his speculative system is clearly understood. The more I study the man himself and his writings, the more fully I comprehend how aloof and apart he was from all external influences, and how original was the character and scope of his genius. Less creative and poetic than Plato, he far excelled him in the rigid consistency and reach of his speculations. No ancient thinker has ever looked so steadily and unweariedly into the face of eternal and spiritual realities as Plotinus, — a man in truth of the sublimest faith in the unseen God. Such a man, living so entirely in the upper world, would naturally have developed out of idealistic premises an abstract and logical metaphysic that would have no room for any descent to earth and time such as an incarnation of God demands. In short, an incarnation is logically impossible in any strict and consistent metaphysical scheme. Such a scheme must complete itself on purely metaphysical lines. It cannot descend from the metaphysical to the physical, phenomenal, historical plane without violating its own cardinal principles. And here is revealed the secret of Plotinus's power as a thinker, and of the tenacity of his grip upon critical thought. While mythologies and speculative systems that are

founded upon legendary traditions are fading out, like a shore fog under the morning sun, the rigid, logical, and intensely metaphysical system of Plotinus is proving itself to be the most vital and indestructible of the world's speculative treasures. Whether it is to stand or fall, one thing is certain, that neither scientific nor historical criticism can directly touch it; for it starts and remains far above all merely phenomenal events, though including them as shadowy and subordinate incidents of its wonderful panorama of existence. With my own historical instincts developed and fortified by a life of historical study and teaching, I confess to a strong disinclination to enter and tread such an airy path. The Plotinian solution of the universe is not for such as I. But at all events the historical critic cannot treat it as he can mythological and legendary cosmogonies. He can only acknowledge that it lies wholly beyond his own historical and critical sphere. Yet this can be said: if metaphysics shall prove to be the master key to the world's enigmas, — which I am not yet ready to grant, — commend me to the optimistic trinitarian idealism of Plotinus.

I hope that I have in some measure, by these preliminary statements, prepared the way for the direct consideration of the Plotinian trinity. I shall not attempt to unfold the subtleties of Plotinus's speculations, except so far as may be necessary for the explanation of his trinitarian views.

Strange as it may seem, the great aim of Plo-

tinus in all his metaphysical writings is wholly practical and religious : it is to defend the reality of man's higher and immortal nature against the materialism and skepticism of his age. Epicureanism, though decadent, still haunted men with its denials of a future spiritual existence. Even Stoicism, with all its lofty ethical ideas, sanctified and embalmed in the noble writings of Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, rested on a materialistic basis that could give no clear assurance of a personal immortality. Against all such ideas Plotinus sought to raise a solid barrier in his metaphysical philosophy. This aim animates him all through his speculations, even in their most transcendental flights, and imparts to them an intense moral earnestness. No more serious explorer after religious truth ever lived. In this respect Plotinus belongs to that select class of "seekers after God," "if haply they might feel after him and find him," which includes such thinkers and seers as Buddha, Zoroaster, Socrates, Plato, Plutarch, and Marcus Aurelius. Equally for them all the great object of their intellectual efforts was to find a resting-place for religious faith, — a solid basis of security and comfort mid the moral evils and mysteries and uncertainties of this mortal life. At times in Plotinus this moral enthusiasm breaks forth in passages of marvellous mystical insight and beauty, which raise his strangely harsh and involved style of thought to a rhythmic heavenly strain that surprises and almost startles us. This moral and

religious quality is well illustrated in the famous chapter (En. V. 1.): "Concerning *the three sovereign hypostases* or principles of being" (Περὶ τῶν τριῶν ἀρχικῶν ὑποστασιῶν), to which I now call special attention. The very first sentence strikes the ethical note which remains as a minor key throughout, and at the close gathers every single various chord into one grand melody: "How happens it that souls become forgetful of God their Father, though they have sprung from him and are wholly of him, and are thus made ignorant of him and also of their own divine nature?" The question is answered by tracing this obliviousness to the union of the soul with matter, as a consequence of which man is turned away from his divine source toward lower corporeal things. "Hence souls seeing neither God nor themselves despise themselves through ignorance of their divine lineage." Plotinus next proceeds to point out the true remedy, namely, that they should be converted from things below them "and be raised to the highest, the one and the first." It is immediately after this exordium that Plotinus develops his trinitarian doctrine as the one only divine method by which souls thus fallen are redeemed, and, having finished it, he returns to his starting-point, thus showing that it has been in his mind all along. Noting the dual character of the soul as having a power of choice between things within and above and things external and inferior, he thus closes: "It is necessary, therefore, if the soul would apprehend what is

higher, that its attention should be turned inward. Just as when any one, desiring to hear a voice that pleases him, separates himself from other voices, and opens his ear to the sweeter sound as it draws near; so here also it is necessary for the soul to dismiss external and sensible sounds, except so far as may be needful, in order to keep pure and ready for use its introspective power, with a view to hearing voices from above."

Such, then, is the point of view from which Plotinus proceeds to unfold his divine trinity. He starts with the assumption that the human soul is spiritual and consequently immortal. It has indeed become oblivious of its divine origin because of its connection with the body. But this is only a temporary condition. The true higher life of the soul does not begin with temporal things or end with them. This leads Plotinus to set forth his doctrine of the soul. It has in its present state two sides or aspects, — a lower side which concerns itself with phenomenal and temporal things, and a higher side that is turned toward the intelligible and divine. Here Plotinus assumes the truth of the Platonic dualistic idealism. He distinguishes the eternal world of ideal spiritual beings from the temporal world of phenomena. This dualistic line between the spiritual and material is drawn in the sharpest manner possible. Soul and body belong to two different spheres of being. The body has a material origin, while the soul is descended from the spiritual world. But

how are these two diverse spheres of being related and bound together? Here Plotinus draws his premise from Plato, but moves on to a more consistent metaphysical conclusion. This premise is one of the most curious speculations in the history of philosophy, and to this day plays no small part in philosophical thought. Let us see how Plato was led to it. The question was how to find a standing-place for the dualistic theory, and make it harmonize with the unity of the world. It is easy enough to assume dualism as a fact. The fundamental differences between mind and matter are patent to every thinker. But how to adjust these differences and explain metaphysically the nature and origin of the union between such diverse forms of being is and always has been the Gordian knot of philosophy. In considering Plato's manner of dealing with it one must remember his whole point of view. He lived in a period of strong reaction from the Ionian physicists, who had sought to find in nature and its phenomena the origin of the world. Anaxagoras had suggested that behind all phenomenal motion and change there must be a mover or principle of motion, and that such a principle must be simple and beyond all mixture or change. This principle he called mind (νοῦς). Out of this pregnant thought was evolved the dualistic school of Socrates and Plato. Its whole aim was to resist the materialistic skepticism which in the Sophistic schools was becoming more and more popular, and

to build on metaphysical foundations a spiritual philosophy. The suggestion of Anaxagoras was made the starting-point. Behind matter is mind. Above the physical is the metaphysical. The true eternal realities are ideal, not phenomenal. The visible world has its basis in the invisible. All individual concrete things are only copies in time of God's eternal ideas, which are the patterns and causes in the divine mind of this phenomenal universe. Plato shows little regard for scientific studies. What little science there was in his day was superficial guesswork, and led to no conclusive results. Plato sought "a more excellent way," — the way of metaphysical speculation. He boldly entered the unseen transcendental sphere, and established himself on the speculative principle that all real truth is eternally existent in the mind of God. This is his famous theory of ideas. But Plato was not a pure idealistic monist. He held to the secondary reality of matter. He could not, even from his idealistic point of view, deny the facts before his eyes as to the temporal reality of the visible world. How shall he unite the two worlds? How shall God, with his eternal ideas or patterns of things, become a creator? Plato might have jumped the whole mystery in the Hebrew fashion, and declared that God created the world by a simple fiat, "out of nothing," as it was explained by Jews and Christians in later times. But Plato was not to be caught in such a metaphysical trap. "Out of nothing nothing can

come" was as familiar to him as to Epicureans of a later day. Here there appears the curious speculation on which he dares to risk his whole metaphysical system. The facts to be explained and harmonized are those which involve two separate and seemingly radically different worlds. What is the tie between them? How can dualism be sustained? In this wise. The ultimate fact of the material world is multiplicity involving motion and change; the ultimate fact of the spiritual world is unity, and sameness, and unchangeability. These two facts are the opposite poles of all existence. But it must be remembered that such facts are only subjectively and logically true. "Sameness and otherness" are mere abstractions and generalizations of the mind, and are logically true only so far as they are abstracted in thought from real objects in nature and experience. But Plato made this principle of logical division a metaphysical one, and treated it as if it were an objective cardinal truth in the nature of things.

This purely speculative and barren assumption was adopted by Plotinus. "Sameness and otherness," he says, "are the first of things" (πρῶτα). How so logical and rigid a thinker as Plotinus could have been willing to stand on so slippery a speculation need cause no surprise. Let him who has not sinned in this way cast the first stone. But in judging him we must not lose sight of his great object in laying down such assumptions. He wishes to build a metaphysical system on

which he may rest his doctrine of the soul. Is the soul mortal or immortal, of earth or of heaven? If immortal and of heavenly origin and mould, how has it been so closely united with a mortal body? "Sameness and otherness" is the "open sesame." Plotinus, like previous Greek philosophers from Thales to Plato, started with oneness as the ultimate principle of nature and the world. Whatever that principle be, water, air, fire, the unlimited, number, it was essentially one. All schools down to Heracleitus allowed this. But how explain the changes and processes of phenomena? "Otherness" involving multiplicity is the counter principle through which nature acts, and to which God himself is subject as the Demiurge or world-former. Plato in the Timæus represents God as making the world-soul before the world itself, out of two elements: "the unchangeable and indivisible, and the divisible and corporeal." Thus was formed "an intermediate essence partaking of *the same* and of *the other*." By "the same" Plato meant the eternal spiritual world "which always is and has no becoming" or change, and by "the other" he meant the material substratum of things which Plato conceived as a purely negative principle, sometimes called by him "space," which, however, was a necessary condition of creation, "the receptacle, and in a manner the nurse of all generation." Thus the world-soul was formed out of the two fundamental principles of things, "the same and the other," and became the mediating

element in the creation of the phenomenal world. Such was Plato's dualistic conception of God, the world-soul, and "the corporeal universe which was formed within and around her." These Platonic speculations are imbedded in the Plotinian philosophy.

But we are seeking in all this curious transcendentalism the germs of the Plotinian trinity, and we are now ready to ask what trinitarian germs, if any, does Plato's view contain. First, we have the Supreme God, who is represented by Plato as the principle of intelligence (νοῦς), of reason (λόγος), and of goodness, and the maker of a good world. With this intent God first formed the soul (ψυχή) as an intermediate being to be the instrument of creation. Thus there emerges a second member of the triad, namely, the Demiurge. But here the evolution pauses. Let us now see how Plotinus completes his trinity on Plato's foundation. It is first of all to be noted that Plato does not make the world-soul an eternal principle of being. So that he after all remains firmly monotheistic. The world-soul is a creation in time, and not therefore to be placed on a par, in any sense, with the eternal God. In truth, Plato's world-soul which he constructs so fancifully out of "sameness and otherness" is simply a *deus ex machina* extemporized for the purpose of bridging the troublesome chasm between two separate worlds. It is just here that Plotinus deviates from his master, and the deviation is radical and profound. It is the

step already noted from theism to pantheism. Plato's God was a self-conscious intelligent personal being, possessing reason (νοῦς, λόγος). Plato called him Father and Creator. His first creative act was the forming of the world-soul to be the mediating instrument in the formation of the world. This whole cosmogony disappears in Plotinus, and gives place to a thoroughly pantheistic view. Plotinus cannot conceive of the first principle of the world as a personal mind (νοῦς), intelligent and active. Such intelligence and activity involves a primary principle behind it. Here Plotinus introduces the Aristotelian axiom that motion implies a mover who causes motion but is not moved. The first principle or Absolute God of both Aristotle and Plotinus is not an active being who by his intelligence and causal energy brings the world into existence, but a pure *deus ex machina*, like Plato's, devised to fill the gap in their philosophy. Aristotle stopped at this point; he did not take the further logical pantheistic step and hold that the first principle was above all limitations or qualities of any sort, and hence impersonal. He described God as a mind (νοῦς) eternally occupied in self-contemplation, and then left him as it were swinging in the metaphysical air, to be the football of philosophical critics who have ever since wrestled over the never settled question whether Aristotle was a theist or pantheist or atheist. The truth is that Aristotle left this point where he found it, since it lay beyond the field of his

inquiries, which were scientific rather than speculative. But Plotinus was not satisfied with such an illogical result. If the first god is not subject to motion and active intelligence, he cannot be a truly intelligent being. Intelligence and the exercise of the eternal ideas which are the patterns and causes of all lower forms of life must belong to a second and derived god. Thus the way is prepared for the full-fledged Plotinian trinity: "The One, The Mind, and The Soul" (τὸ ἕν, ὁ νοῦς, ἡ ψυχή). Behind the First God and Father of Plato (ὁ ὤν or ὁ νοῦς) another god is inserted by Plotinus (τὸ ἕν), so that Plato's one and only God becomes in Plotinus a second principle. The completely pantheistic character of the Plotinian system is here seen. His First God is not a person or even an active principle. Activity proceeds from him, since he is the first cause of all activity, but the first principle itself can be defined only as "The One." It is "superior to all essence," for all essence or active intelligent being is derived from it, and what is derived must be inferior to the cause of such derivation. I need not dwell on the curious argument of Plotinus in defense of his position that "The One" is the only proper name of the "first hypostasis" or god. It is purely speculative, logical, and subjective. Most curious of all, perhaps, is his idea that the first god is "The One" because he is above or superior to *number*, as to everything else. But is not *one* a number as much as *two* or *three?* Why, then, is the first

principle any more superior to number than the second or the third, and why is the first principle any the less an essence than the second or third? Of course "one" is the actual initial terminus of all numbers, and so Plotinus was compelled to accept it as the logical basis of his trinity. It is a remarkable evidence of his sense of the unreality of his logical definition of "The One" that he so constantly applies to it another name, namely, "The Good;" for what is "The Good" if not a moral and personal being? Plotinus was led to this second definition of his first god by his Platonism. Plato's ideal theory culminated in "the idea of the good," which Plato himself identified with his personal God. Plotinus avoids this logical contradiction, — for ideas are abstractions, not persons, — by separating all conscious ideas from the First God and placing them in the Second God (ὁ νοῦς). Thus his First God is without ideas of any sort, — a mere principle of unity and nothing more. Why, then, did he so often style his first principle "The Good" (τὸ καλόν), thus taking away with one hand what he had given with the other? There is but one answer possible. In every rigidly metaphysical system there must lie somewhere, more or less concealed, a premise which involves a logical break. In Plato it was his theory of ideas which he treated as real entities independent of and apart from all individual phenomena. But an idea is an abstract universal and cannot be individualized. Yet Plato jumped this

logical chasm, and identified his highest universal, "the idea of the good," with a personal God. Plotinus avoided this dilemma by adopting the pantheistic view of God, which placed him above all personal qualities, but the same logical antinomy met him at another point. If God is above all moral qualities and limitations, how can he be called "good?" But how could Plotinus build a moral system issuing in a moral universe, with souls that are on an upward road toward the highest holiness and blessedness, without a moral or good first principle? For according to his own frequently expressed axiom, whatever is derived must be inferior to its cause, and how then can an *unmoral* first cause produce a *moral* world? We must not forget that Plotinus was from first to last a moral and religious thinker. In the end metaphysical consistency, in his case as in that of so many others, had to give way to the interests of religion.

The *first* and *second* principles of Plotinus having thus been developed out of Plato's one God, the way is prepared for the *third*. In his doctrine of "The One" and "The Mind," one metaphysical question has been answered, namely, how an intelligent active cause of the world can be speculatively connected with the eternal first principle of all being. But a second question now emerges: how can the divine Mind put into operation the ideas which are the patterns and causes of all corporeal phenomena and bridge the chasm which separates mind from matter? A third principle

is needed, inasmuch as the second principle is not competent for this work by itself, since, as Plotinus conceives, its sole activity and life consists in turning itself toward the first principle and receiving its eternal energy of being and good. Only by the generation out of Mind of a third principle can the end be secured. This third principle is the soul (ψυχή), which, being derived from Mind, is inferior to it, and so is conceived of by Plotinus as endowed with a double capacity, namely, to turn towards Mind as its generative cause of life and activity and also towards the material element which Plotinus, as a Platonist, holds to be eternally existent as a pure capacity or possibility of life when acted upon and vitalized by "The Soul." But where, we may ask, does Plotinus get this double aspect and capacity of the soul? If the second principle of being, the Mind, has only a capacity of turning toward its superior and cause, — the first principle, the One or Good, — why should not the same be true of the third principle, the Soul? But this natural question does not seem to trouble Plotinus. The inductive method of reasoning, which demands some basis of fact or evidence from experience, was far from his sphere of thought. It was enough for him that his grand pantheistic scheme demanded it. Beyond his three eternal metaphysical principles of being hovered a secondary principle of matter on which the three immaterial principles must operate, if the world is to be formed, and it was the third subor-

dinate principle, Soul, that was necessitated to do this work. It is the same old problem which the dualist always has to solve: how get across from mind to matter. Plotinus cuts the knot by giving to the third hypostasis, soul, a double character and faculty. Soul, he says, has two or even three parts. "One part of it always abides on high, another part is conversant with sensible or corporeal things, and another still has a subsistence between them." Of course it is now easy for the soul to preserve its relation to the two principles from which it is generated and to which it must always turn, and yet be "drawn downward" by its closeness to matter, and become the generator of the material world, and even temporarily forgetful, at least in part, of its divine origin. Just here is the precise point where the Platonic theism becomes the Plotinian pantheism. Plato bridges the dualistic chasm by a purely creative act, leaving the metaphysical higher world still separate from the lower phenomenal world; but Plotinus fills the chasm which he allows to exist in the nature of things by extending over it the same generative power and activity which he makes the essential bond and force of his metaphysical trinity.

We have seen how important a part this theory of generation has played in all trinitarian views; but in Plotinus for the first and the last time it is not only made the fundamental characteristic of his trinitarianism but also is carried forward to the further evolution of the whole universe. His whole evolu-

tion doctrine is founded on generation. The second principle, Mind, is generated from the first principle, the One, and the third principle, the Soul, is equally generated from Mind. He defends this view by declaring that the very perfection of God requires that he should generate an image of himself, catching his idea from Plato, who declared that God, being good, must manifest his goodness in the creation of a good world. But Plotinus goes still further. The soul, too, since it is a true image of God, must generate a true image of itself. This image must be inferior to its pattern ; and as the soul is the lowest form or principle of the spiritual world, and as that which is next below it is matter, its generative power must be exercised on matter, and produce the material world. This generative process is conceived by Plotinus as without beginning. Not only does the Plotinian trinity exist by *eternal generation*, but the world is equally eternal. The principle of progression which the terms generation or evolution would seem to involve is, with Plotinus, as he directly asserts, logical, not chronological. Closely connected with the Plotinian theory of *generation* in the trinity is that of *subordination*. The one is, in fact, involved in the other. Hence the second principle is inferior to the first, and the third to the second. So the temporal or phenomenal world is inferior to the ideal world, and in the lower world itself the same law works through a downward movement to the lowest possible forms of nature.

Two things are especially to be noted in this scheme of the universe. In the first place, Plotinus draws the line sharply, as we have seen, between the metaphysical and the physical at the point next below the soul. His trinity is wholly metaphysical. The soul itself is wholly of spiritual origin and nature, and even when individualized in human bodies it may recognize its divine parentage and know in its own moral consciousness that it is *homoousios* (complete in likeness) with God. After all, then, it may be asked, is not Plotinus a true dualist rather than a pantheist? But note where his doctrine of generation carries him. All generation involves the transmission of the essential nature of the author of generation. If the soul, as the third principle of divinity, has generated the world, then the world thus generated must contain the essential principle of divinity, though in a lower form; and this is precisely the view of Plotinus. His reported last words show this: "I go hence to carry the divine in me to the divine in the universe," — a phrase which contains the very essence of pantheism.[1]

The second thing to be noted is this. It is curious to find Plotinus contending against the Christian Gnostic sect, which held to a long series of divine emanations of which the preëxistent Christ in the form of νοῦς or λόγος was the first, that such a series of emanations must be limited to *three*.

[1] See critical note on Plotinus's pantheism at the end of this chapter.

In short, he held that the forms or principles of the eternal divine being were in the very nature of things confined strictly to a fixed number, namely *three*, and that no increase or diminution was possible, and he entered into a detailed argument to prove it. It is needless to say that Plotinus here perhaps surpasses himself in this speculative spinning of spiders' webs. But why was he so solicitous to guard his doctrine of "three hypostases?" Was not his whole system *Gnostic* in its essential character? Had he not bridged the dualistic chasm more completely than the Gnostics themselves? Without the slightest doubt. Why, then, did he go out of his way to attack them? The reason is clear. He feared the result of his own speculations. How could he answer the question inevitably raised concerning his system, whether any real dualism was left? His reply is found in the line that he draws so insistently between "the three hypostases" and the rest of the universe. But the question remains and will not down: Why, from the Plotinian pantheistic point of view, should the number of the divine principles of being stop with three? What subtle metaphysical significance in the number three is there which should make it give absolute law to the mode of existence of the divine nature? And, further, why, on the Plotinian theory, should the line of division between mind and matter occur just at this point? Why should not the descending force of generation lose itself so gradually and

secretly in lower forms of life that it would not be possible for any keenest metaphysical eye to see it? Plotinus gives no answer. He does not even seem aware that any answer is needed. But while he was intent on preserving the form of dualism by his doctrine of three hypostases, it must be recognized that his trinity is as pantheistic as the rest of his system. His three principles of being "The One, Mind, and Soul," are not three personal individual beings. Plotinus did not employ the term ὑπόστασις (hypostasis) with the meaning afterwards applied to it by Athanasius or by Origen. I must refer the reader to my previous volume for an account of the changes of meaning that this word underwent in the theological nomenclature of the fourth century. Enough here to say that to Plotinus, as to Plato and Aristotle, ὑπόστασις meant the underlying essence or principle of things. He conceived of three such essential forms as lying at the basis of all existence. To the "one or good" he would not allow even any *hypostatic* character, since it was "superior to all essence" and could not be numbered, as all individual beings can; so that we must regard his employment of the term hypostasis to designate "the one" as a yielding to the necessities of language, and to be interpreted in an improper or metaphorical sense. The second principle, mind, in the Plotinian trinity was an hypostatic being, though not personalized, but only separated from "the one" by "otherness" or difference. Hence Plotinus's spec-

ulation that "mind, essence, otherness, and sameness are the first existences," by which he meant that "the one," being without all qualities or definition, was beyond essence, and hence not a true hypostasis or being, though "the first cause" of all being. The use made by Plotinus of the Platonic term "the same and the other" is curious. No such distinction can apply, he thinks, to "the one." It first begins to emerge in the second hypostasis, Mind, and appears in the ideas of the Mind, which can be numbered; hence Mind is essence, since it "can be circumscribed." But it is in the third hypostasis, the soul, that "otherness" has fullest play. For soul comes into contact with matter in which "otherness" or multiplicity has its true abiding-place. It is in this way that "otherness" becomes a part of the bridge over which Plotinus is able to pass from "the one," which is only "the same," and hence unchangeable, to "the many," that is, the phenomenal world. How airy and unsubstantial such a speculative bridge is needs no argument. To build on it a whole philosophical system would be impossible to any one who had not a complete faith in metaphysics as the key of all knowledge. Such, indeed, was the faith of Plotinus, and having constructed out of his own speculations this metaphysical passageway from earth to heaven, which might well be compared to the Zoroastrian bridge of Chinevad, — so narrow that even the righteous could not pass over it alone, without falling into

the abyss below, — he traveled it with a confidence that is sublime.

It may be asked whether the trinity of Plotinus is, after all, anything more than a playing with words. Certainly it is not a tri-personal trinity. In this respect it differs, as we have seen, from all the mythological triads of the Ethnic religions, and can be compared only with the Hindoo Brahmanical *trimurti*. But even in the Hindoo triad there is a mythological basis and element, so that the Plotinian trinity remains to this day the solitary example of a pantheistic trinitarianism, which is wholly consistent with itself. At a later point in our study we shall compare the trinity of Plotinus with that of the Christian religion. I may, however, anticipate that comparative survey so far as to say that the logical tendency toward pantheism which is inherent in every philosophical form of trinity is illustrated in the Christian dogma in its later Augustinian Sabellian form, and especially in the present efforts of theologians who still wear the trinitarian mask to harmonize their so-called trinitarianism with a monistic philosophy. It is interesting to observe that the old Platonic-Plotinian speculative device of "sameness and otherness," with all its pantheistic implications, is still employed as though it were really something more than a metaphysical snare to catch the unwary.

I cannot leave this analysis of the Plotinian trinity without once more bearing testimony to my profound sense of the moral fervor of Plotinus's

writings. Such a brief analysis as has been attempted can convey no adequate idea of the impression which the Enneads make on the mind. I have given a mere skeleton of the Plotinian trinitarian philosophy. To see it clothed in its proper body, and arrayed in the fair form of the Plotinian mystical idealism, one must study deeply and patiently that wonderful compound of speculative thought which was gathered into the Enneads by Plotinus's great disciple, Porphyry.

The extremely metaphysical character of Plotinus's writings seems, at first sight, to indicate an excessive intellectualism. But such is not the fact. Metaphysic was for Plotinus the highest form of truth, and truth was equally for him the life of religion. The words put by the author of the Fourth Gospel on the lips of Christ, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," caught their idealistic meaning from the same headspring that fed Plotinus's soaring spirit. All the loftiest spiritual natures have always drawn their visions of divine truth from faith in an unseen ideal world, and from a metaphysic that gives a foundation to the doctrine of the soul's essential spirituality and divinity. I do not forget the criticism of Augustine upon "the Platonic books," in which, no doubt, the works of Plotinus were included, as he compared them with the scriptures, namely, that though these books gave a vision of heavenly things and "the land of peace," they failed "to show the way thither." But surely such a view of "the land

that is very far off" as Plotinus held up before the soul has no small part to play in the enkindling of its immortal yearnings and energies, and in its true awakening from forgetfulness of its divine original and home; and such, in fact, is the effect of a thorough study of this marvelous thinker. Airy and unsubstantial though his metaphysic may be, yet, once the bridge is crossed from earth to heaven, the soul feels that somehow its true eternal resting-place is reached. No one can drink deeply of Plotinus without becoming conscious that the Plotinian stream was somehow drawn from the fountains of eternal truth, however much we may criticise the channels through which its living waters have flowed. Surely such words as these with which the Enneads close have a far off and supernal ring: "Such is the life of the gods, and of divine and happy men free from all external things here below, — a life above the senses and its pleasures, — *a flight of the Alone to the Alone* (φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον).

I have alluded to Porphyry, who wrote the life of Plotinus and to whom we owe the preservation of his master's teachings. A letter of Porphyry to his wife Marcella, recently brought to light, is a beautiful illustration of the New Platonic religious spirit. No more pious, or sweet and touching revelation of a man's inner spiritual life can be found in epistolary literature, — written as it was in all the freedom of a private correspondence, in a season of forced absence. With a pathetic

tenderness he turns the thoughts of his life-companion away from his earthly self, whose separation from her she is mourning, to that higher spiritual self that is ever present with her, and with which she may continually commune; and from this point of view he leads her upward into the larger spiritual life that is open to all good and loving souls. The whole epistle is redolent with the pure atmosphere of heaven. The writer seems to live habitually in the clear vision of divine things, while earth and time and all their petty affairs fade out of view. Is it all fine writing, a sort of "Epistle to Posterity?" I cannot think so. I would rather believe that Porphyry, like his master Plotinus, was one of those seekers after God who found Christ's own words true: "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

In concluding this survey of the Ethnic trinities and before proceeding to a comparison of them with the Christian dogma, I wish to call attention to the remarkable freedom of the Ethnic trinitarian ideas from gross and degrading superstitions, and to the growing elevation and moral purity of Ethnic thought in the progress of the ages. The study of comparative religion has done much to remove the traditional Christian prejudice concerning the real origin and character of these religions. It has been the custom in Christian ecclesiastical history to apply the terms "pagan" and "heathen" to them in a bad sense, as

if they were essentially evil and false, — the work of evil-minded men and even of diabolical supernatural beings. Such views were born of historical ignorance. Our survey shows that the Ethnic religions, especially in their ideas of God and of the supernatural sphere, are the result of the earnest efforts of men, in the dawn of moral consciousness and under the dim light of the earliest divine revelations, to learn the truth concerning God and his relations to this world. The crudeness of their ideas, as seen in the oldest mythologies and cosmogonies, does not lessen our sense of the truly moral and religious character of such efforts to find God and to bring him down within the reach of human scrutiny and faith and worship. Rather our sympathy grows for these ancestors of our race as we realize more fully how meagre was their religious light compared with ours. Surely there were men of great faith among them, even if the objects of their faith seem to us so allied to error and superstition. One cannot read the Odyssey, or the Æneid, or the moral sayings of Buddha or Socrates, or the writings of Plato, or Plutarch, or Seneca, or Marcus Aurelius, or Plotinus, or Porphyry, without feeling assured that these men had somehow learned the great secret of communion with the higher world. Paul's stern indictment against heathenism in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans applies equally to a degenerate Christianity. The wicked practices of heathen men are no worse than those

of nominal Christians, and are not to be confounded with the efforts, often made with the loftiest spirit of sacrifice, of either Ethnic or Christian saints, to realize the moral ideals that flitted before their aspiring souls. As we push back our investigations into primeval times, the religious light grows dimmer, and religious ideas and beliefs grow more naturalistic, and fanciful, and tinged with a childish spirit of fear, but the *reality* of this early religion is none the less clear, and from it are plainly drawn whatever moral sanctions have had power with men. Further, the upward progress of the religious beliefs of men is equally clear as the path of history from the beginning is traced. Compare, for example, the early religious ideas of Egypt with the idealistic philosophy of Plotinus. The passage from the Egyptian animal worship to the Plotinian transcendentalism involves a religious evolution that is vast indeed, outstripping, perhaps, any other like evolution in human experience, whether in science, in history, or in philosophy.

CRITICAL NOTE ON THE QUESTION OF PLOTINUS'S PANTHEISM.

Mr. W. R. Inge of Oxford, England (Bampton Lecturer, 1899), in a valuable and suggestive article in the "American Journal of Theology," April, 1900, on "The permanent influence of Neo-Platonism upon Christianity," holds that Plotinus was not a pantheist. He says (page 336) that Plotinus sought to "save per-

sonality while insisting on unity." Does Mr. Inge suppose that the "three hypostases" in the view of Plotinus were individual personal beings? If so, I must disagree with him entirely. In the Plotinian vocabulary hypostasis (ὑπόστασις) did not mean an individual or person. Plotinus used the term in the sense of Aristotle as an underlying principle (ἄρχη) of existence. "The One, Mind, Soul," were in no sense persons. They were super-personal. Personality and separate individuality for Plotinus involved connection with matter. They had no place in the intelligible or ideal world (κόσμος νοητός). Here the dualism of Plotinus significantly appears. The two worlds are "separated" (χωρίσθεντα) from each other: but the hypostases "are not separated from each other" (V. 1, 6.), because there is nothing between them. Separation involving individuality begins with the union of spirit and matter. Plotinus supports his position with the assertion of Aristotle that "the first principle is separate from matter." Moreover, he declares that what is true of the first and second principles is equally true of the third, the soul, viewed in its higher aspect. "We must not inquire after a place (χώρα) where we may establish it, but it must be assigned apart (ἔξω) from all place." Only when the soul has become embodied in nature is it individualized and personalized. It is in harmony with this view that Plotinus treats the human soul as descending from a pre-incarnate impersonal form of existence, to awaken, when united with the body, to a self-conscious state as an individualized person, and at death, as returning from this separated corporeal condition to the eternal unity of the all in all. I suspect that Plotinus's use of the phrase "*sameness and otherness*" has misled Mr. Inge. In one place (V. 1, 6, end) Plotinus says that "the second principle, being generated from

the first principle, is present with it in such a way as to be *separated from it* by *otherness alone*." The term "separated" here must be interpreted in the light of the preceding statement already quoted, where Plotinus insists that the two principles are not separated. The vacillation in language here observable illustrates the speculative difficulty in which Plotinus as well as Plato was involved. To defend his dualism he must introduce *separation somewhere*. He begins with its negative or idealistic presence in the intelligible world, as a sort of shadowy anticipation of its real existence in the form of *multiplicity and separateness* in the phenomenal world. The assertion of Mr. Inge, that "the true sign of individuality is *not separation but distinction*," as applied to God in trinity, certainly savors of Sabellianism, and, as applied to created moral beings, as truly savors of pantheism. At all events, such language is wholly foreign to Plotinus. For him, personality with individual self-consciousness involves separation, and separation is the attribute of matter. Hence his doctrine of the ideal world and of its trinity is wholly pantheistic. He allows a "*distinction*" in "the three hypostases," to wit, of "otherness;" but not of separate personality. *Persons* belong only to the material world of multiplicity and change; but even their personality is rather an accident than a fundamental attribute of being. The human soul, on leaving the body, its temporary abode, drops with the body all the accidents of its bodily existence and returns to its previous ideal state, where all separation ends and where the one (τὸ ἕν) is the all (πάν) and the all is one. The whole of the Enneads is saturated with the Plotinian pantheism; but I would call special attention to the fourth and fifth Books of the sixth Ennead and will give a few extracts in support of what I must regard as the only

possible interpretation. In En. VI. 4, 15, Plotinus, speaking of the relation of the soul to the body, and of the comparative good and evil growing out of such a relation, says: "Why is the liberation of the soul from the body good? Because while it is not of the body in its nature, yet when it is spoken of as such through union with it, it becomes somehow partial (μερική) rather than universal (ἐκ τοῦ παντός): for its energy is no longer devoted to the whole, although being itself of the whole. Just as if one who is learned in all knowledge should confine himself to a single department of it. For each soul when wholly separate from body is no longer an individual (ἑκάστη): but when separated from the ideal world, not in place but in energy, it becomes something particular (τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον) and is a certain portion of the whole rather than the whole itself, though *in another manner* it is universal; but when it presides over nothing material and particular it is *wholly* universal, though *retaining its capacity* of partition." I must here call attention to Mr. Inge's apparent misunderstanding of the use made by Plotinus of the term ἕκαστος (each). He says: "Plotinus asserts personality — δεῖ ἕκαστον ἕκαστον εἶναι." But Plotinus in the passage which I have quoted above confines the application of the term ἕκαστον to the world of matter; it has no place in the world of spirit. Does Mr. Inge mean that "Plotinus asserts personality" in *this present world* merely? If so, I have no controversy with him. But this is far from proving that Plotinus was not a pantheist. No one of course denies that human souls in the present bodily state are personal, in the sense of being self-conscious beings. The question between the pantheist and the theist is whether such personal self-consciousness is a temporary and accidental phenomenon or an essential element in all moral existence.

But if any doubt could remain, the following extracts would seem decisive. "It is universally believed among men that the one and same in number is everywhere also a whole, since all men from the movements of their own free moral consciousness declare that God (τόν θεόν) is in each of us as one and the same." "Understand, then, that this God is not in one place or another, but equally everywhere; but if God is everywhere he cannot be divided into parts, since, then, he would no longer be everywhere, but individual parts of him (ἕκαστον αὐτοῦ μέρος) would exist in different places, and no longer form one whole. *Besides, God would then be a body* (σῶμα). But if this cannot be, then it must follow that in every particular man God is present with him, and at the same time exists everywhere as the universal whole." Plotinus proceeds to extend this view to the whole trinity of the ideal world. "For since there are in the intelligible world three several classes of being in a certain order, suspended, as if in one sphere from one point, without being separated by intervals but all united with one another, it results that where the first class of being is present, there also the second class is, and also the third." Passing now to the soul as existing in a human body and so to a certain extent separated from the ideal world, Plotinus enters into a curious description of such a soul as belonging to both worlds and illustrating both *sameness and otherness*. And here he touches that key which he is continually striking in his whole philosophy, namely, the soul's true divinity. "As to us men our truest possessions and we ourselves belong to real being (εἰς τὸ ὄν), and naturally ascend to it, being originally derived from it, and we intuitively perceive the realities of that world, not needing images or types of them, but directly discerning them. From which it follows that we truly belong to

that world (ἔσμεν ἐκεῖνα)." "Hence *as pure souls* we are one and all (πάντα ἄρα ἔσμεν ἕν). But *when we look without ourselves to the external world* rather than to that ideal world whence we came, we become ignorant of our true condition as one (ἓν ὄντες). But should any one be able to turn himself in that upward direction, either by his own power or through the aid of Athene, he will perceive himself to be God and the all (θεόν τε καὶ αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ πὰν ὄψεται)." Such is the bold consistent pantheism of Plotinus. Some one may inquire whether the soul's "perceiving itself to be God" does not allow individual personality. Of course it does, for Plotinus is here dealing with the soul in its present state of separation and multiplicity. When, however, its release from the body occurs, all the conditions of its separated life will disappear and it will become like God himself, the one-all whom Plotinus describes as neither beholding himself (οὐδὲ Βλέπει δὲ ἑαυτόν), nor exercising any intellectual apprehension, and of whom nothing can be predicated or known by perception or intelligence (En. VI. 7, 41). Pantheism can go no further. Mr. Inge says: "Plotinus is no Buddhist." If he means that Plotinus did not hold to the final absorption of the soul's present conscious personal life at death into the super-conscious Nirvana of pantheistic Buddhism, how does he interpret the above quoted passages, or in fact the Enneads as a whole, for they are marvelously consistent throughout in their fundamental premises?

PART II

THE RELATIONS OF THE ETHNIC TRINITIES TO THE CHRISTIAN TRINITY

"The conversion of ecclesiastical and confessional Christianity into historical Christianity is the work of Biblical science." — Henri-Frederic Amiel.

"The true historian — he who most sympathetically, as well as correctly, reads to the present the lessons to be derived from the experiences of the past — I hold to be the only latter-day prophet. That man has a message to deliver." — Charles Francis Adams, President of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

CHAPTER I

EXTERNAL OR HISTORICAL RELATIONS

The law of historical evolution is universal and knows no break in its line of continuity. This is a first principle of the scientific or historical method. It holds true as well in the history of religion, as in that of nature or of human life, in its practical, social, or intellectual movements. Otherwise there could be no *history* of religion. Our previous studies have given ample evidence that the religious ideas of men, from the earliest times, have moved along the same line of historical evolution that has governed all other earthly things. The consideration upon which we now enter cannot therefore he treated as exceptional. The relations of the Ethnic trinities to the Christian dogma have a plain historical foundation. The close internal relations which will be considered later, both of resemblance and difference, naturally suggest and involve a common external background and source in history. Already, in our survey of the Ethnic trinities, indications of such relationship have appeared, having their basis and spring in the common religious nature of man. But when we enter the field of Christian origins

such indications become the very material and substratum of religious history itself. No historical breach occurs, but the old evolution moves on in the ordinary historical channels, though providential changes and reformations of a remarkable character take place. Such changes and reformations were not new in the history of religion at the time of Christ's coming. Witness the Hebrew monotheistic reformation under Moses, the great Persian religious movement in the time of Zoroaster, the founding of Buddhism, one of the most remarkable religious epochs in human annals, and finally, that wonderful period of intellectual and moral illuminism in the Greek world, heralded by Socrates, and developed into immortal literary form by Plato, by means of which the old superstitious faith in an idolatrous polytheism was shattered, and the basis of a spiritual doctrine of God and the soul laid in the Platonic idealistic philosophy, and the way thus providentially prepared for the reception of Christianity. This new religion was a natural outgrowth of the earlier Mosaic reformation and of the Jewish monotheistic faith which was built upon it. At the beginning of the Christian era, Judaism had become corrupt and the needed reformer appeared in Jesus of Nazareth. No more truly historical event has ever occurred than the advent of the Nazarene. He was of Jewish ancestry and training, and came forth from his Galilean home filled with a true, evangelistic zeal, as a religious reformer, against

the false religionists of his day. His great effort was to revive the older prophetic teaching, in all its living spiritual power, in place of the dead, formal, and hypocritical orthodoxy of the later Jewish Pharisaism. Further on I shall dwell more fully on the character of his messianic mission. My present object is to mark the fact that this new religious epoch began in a completely historical way and was a natural development out of previous chapters of religious history. The appearance of Jesus Christ can just as easily be accounted for, from a historical point of view, as that of Zoroaster or Moses or Gautama or Socrates. One divine providential purpose and movement, working through history according to one universal law of good, though "at sundry times and in divers manners," lies behind them all.

The mysteries of the divine selection and calling and administration by which such religious epochs are brought about are closed to the historian's ken; but the earthly human movements themselves, with all their religious results, are wholly within the range of historical research, and, thanks to the new science and history, are being brought out more and more clearly into the light of open day. Should any one here bring forward the legends concerning a miraculous birth of Christ, in the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke, or the philosophical proem of the Fourth Gospel, concerning a divine incarnation, the historical reply must be that such legendary and philo-

sophical growths did not first gather around the life of Christ, but were the common accompaniment of all remarkable religious epochs and characters, as our previous studies have illustrated in the case of Zoroaster, Buddha, and Plato. Later legends represented them all as miraculously born of virgin mothers through a divine parentage ; and one of them, Buddha, became also the medium of a divine incarnation. It is needless to add that such ideas form the common stock of all ancient mythologies, which show how ingrained they were in the earliest traditions of the race. For a fuller critical account of the Christian legends and the way in which they arose, I must refer my readers to my earlier volume. Such legends do not come directly within the historical field, but must be cast aside as misgrowths of a credulous and uncritical age. Even were they accepted as true, it would not affect the position which the historical student must take, namely, that the evolution of religion in its ordinary natural movement is able to explain in a strictly historical way the appearance of Christ and his religion.

I proceed, then, to trace the evidence of historical relations between the Ethnic trinities and the Christian dogma. Such evidence seems scarcely necessary when it is considered that the Christian religion has hitherto been regarded as, beyond all other religions, a historical one and based on historical facts. The traditional dogmatic apologists of Christianity have made much of the assured

fact that the chief articles of the Christian creeds were actual historical events, while the Ethnic religious ideas were purely subjective delusions born of the mythological imagination or speculative reason, which alike were under the control of a fallen and depraved nature. Frequently in theological literature such matters as the virgin miraculous birth of Christ, his resurrection and ascension, his incarnation and his preëxistent condition as the second person of the trinity, and even the trinity itself, are described as historical facts in contrast with similar legends and dogmas current in the Ethnic religions, which are treated as inventions of Satan, or at least as superstitious and wicked forms of error. So recent and learned a writer as Rev. J. K. Illingworth, the Bampton lecturer for 1894, and the author of a work on "Divine Immanence," published in 1898, in a chapter of the latter book, on "The Incarnation and the Trinity," allows himself to use such language as this: "Viewed, then, in the light of its history, the doctrine of the trinity is no metaphysical invention, like the Platonic 'ideas' or the Aristotelian 'form,' but simply the expression in philosophical language of *what had entered the world as a statement of fact — the fact that there is plurality, triune plurality, in God*." "Accordingly, it will be noticed that Hilary here, like Augustine after him, bases the doctrine of the trinity on the simple fact, namely, the baptismal formula of the Christian church." I

confess that I marvel as I read these statements by a prominent English divine, — not merely in view of the confusion of the dogmatic and the metaphysical and historical points of view so curiously revealed, but even more at the apparent historical ignorance so naïvely displayed. Yet Mr. Illingworth must be aware that the baptismal trinitarian formula was not "a simple fact" of original Christianity, but the result of a historical evolution from the original norm which was simply a baptism in the name of Christ. The evolution from the *one* name to *three* names accompanied the corresponding evolution of monotheism into trinitarianism. As to Mr. Illingworth's assertion, that the trinity philosophically expresses "a fact," and is therefore "no metaphysical invention, like the Platonic 'ideas,'" I will only ask the reader to postpone judgment to the conclusion of this historical survey. But it has not been my object, in referring to Mr. Illingworth's book, to criticise it, so much as to illustrate with it the insistence of Christian apologists on the *real historicity* of the Christian religion. Allowing, then, its true historical character, it must follow that Christianity forms an essential part of the history of religion as a whole. It is true that the counter-assumption has usually been implied, namely, that all other religions are wanting largely in this note of historicity or historical credibility. But recent studies in comparative religion have demolished completely all such assumptions. What do we

mean when we speak of a religion as historical? Do we mean that its doctrines, as philosophical formulas, are historical events? Such a statement carries its falsity on its very face. Philosophical formulas are ideal abstractions, whether true or false; but abstractions are creations of the mind, not concrete historical events. The history of theology, both Christian and Ethnic, shows how such abstract doctrines concerning God and man and the world have been slowly evolved as civilization has advanced. But to call such notions of God and man and nature "facts of history" is an abuse of language which one seeks for in vain outside of theologians themselves. History and historical credibility, in the scientific meaning of these terms, apply equally to all religions. Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Mohammedanism, are as truly historical religions as Christianity. Every religious idea that ever appeared in the world is historical, just so far, and so far only, as it has succeeded in propagating itself among men, who are the only mediums of historical events. Mormonism, for example, is having a very concrete historical place in any complete survey of the world's religions, as American history conclusively shows. It is not, then, the truth or falsity of a religion that is the test of its historicity, but whether it entered human life, with all its truth or falsehood, as a hard, concrete fact, and became a blessing or bane to human souls. Comparative religion as a historical science deals only with

matters of historical fact. A complete historical survey of the world, as far back toward the origins of mankind as research allows, reveals a multitude of religions and of religious ideas, infinitely diversified, and yet wonderfully homogeneous; and it has been the task of the historical student to seek, by a comparative and discriminating analysis, the elements which look toward community of origin and faith on the one hand, and toward divergence and complexity as the result of differences of environment or of free speculative thought, on the other. The gain not only to science, but also to religion itself, of such a comparative study must be plain to every candid mind. But such a study, to be fruitful, must rest on a purely scientific and historical basis. All religions alike must be treated in their purely historical aspects, and accepted as equally having a place in the providential history of the race. As a historical religion, then, Christianity must come under the same historic laws of natural, providential evolution as any and every other. Almost all the more recent religions of the world have started from a single historical founder whose new conceptions of truth have been historically developed into philosophical and dogmatic systems of one sort or another. These different systems have frequently affected each other and led to modifications which have resulted in new lines of theological evolution. In this respect it will be found that Christianity is no exception to the

general rule. In a passage which reveals a profoundly philosophical and critical spirit, H. F. Amiel in his "Journal Intime," says most truly: "What we call Christianity is a vast ocean into which flow a number of spiritual currents of distant and various origin, — certain religions, that is to say, of Asia and of Europe, the great ideas of Greek wisdom, and especially those of Platonism. Neither its doctrine nor its morality, as they have been historically developed, are new or spontaneous. What is original and specific in Christianity is Jesus, — *the religious consciousness of Jesus*." It has been the traditional dogmatic view that Christianity, with all its accretion of dogmas and rites gathered in the course of centuries, was a new religion throughout, introduced into the world by Jesus of Nazareth, who broke the continuity of history and of historical religions through a divine incarnation which miraculously transcended all ordinary natural laws and became the witness and seal of a direct and perfect revelation of God, who in Jesus himself was thus actually "manifest in the flesh" to men. This view made the *person* of Jesus the very substance of truth. The unknown author of the Fourth Gospel makes Christ say: "*I am* the truth." Of course, then, Christ's teachings, in contrast with those of all other religious prophets and sages, were of heavenly origin, and hence infallible and perfect. Christianity thus became differentiated from all other religions as the one divine gospel, with the

seal upon it of God himself, while those religions were of human fabrication, — the work of men who "did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Christianity, therefore, was the only true religion, and other religions were false. How entirely without historical foundation this whole view is I need not here do more than simply declare. Every page of history contributes its quota of evidence in its refutation. That it should have been accepted as true, unhistorical as it was, in the Dark Ages, when civilization almost expired, and the Christian religion itself became a system of degrading superstitions, is not surprising. How could it have been otherwise, when earth and air were filled with supernatural beings whose diabolical nature and power were mostly exercised in tormenting and terrifying poor humanity, and God had, to human view, almost left his own world. It was in such an age that Christianity completed its dogmatic and ritualistic forms, — a time of intellectual and moral gloom, when history became a "lost art" and legend and fable filled the whole horizon of human life with delusion and fear. The real surprise begins when, in the closing days of the nineteenth century, under the light of a new science and history which has so thoroughly dispelled the ghosts of past ignorance, men with professed historical learning could uphold so groundless an assumption.

Going back now to the historical origin of Christianity in the life and teachings of its founder, we

ask: What was its historical starting-point? In other words, wherein did Jesus of Nazareth show himself a religious genius and leader, and what was the new truth which became the seed of a new religion? Certainly the answer is not to be found in any new dogmas which he gave to the world. Christ's teaching was ethical rather than dogmatic. So far as he had what we may call a theology, it was derived from his Jewish ancestors and from their Scriptures. His doctrine of God, man, sin, a future life, heaven, hell, was not original at all, but was a part of the accepted creed of his own day. As to those later Christian dogmas, such as incarnation, miraculous virgin birth, trinity, etc., which were the result of a slow evolution and cannot be attributed to Christ himself, should it be claimed that as Christian doctrines they originated in Christ's own teachings, and should the claim be allowed, even then history shows that such dogmas were not original with Christianity. Miraculous births and divine incarnations were common appendages of new religious movements ages before Christ's day. As to the trinity, though Mr. Illingworth claims that "it was implicit in the Christian creed," and "was not borrowed from Plato or any other Ethnic source" (Bampton Lectures, 1894, p. 66), I can only express my surprise that any scholar in these days should dare to make such a claim, and refer my readers, for the abundant evidence in disproof, to my "Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism" and to the

fuller testimony of the book in hand. I will simply add that if there is one historical fact that is more assured to me than any other in the history of Christian theology, it is the fact that the Christian trinitarian dogma, with its cardinal logos doctrine, is the direct lineal descendant of the Platonic dualistic idealism.

Nor, again, does the newness of the gospel consist in its *philosophy*. To call the "good news" which Christ proclaimed to men a new philosophy is a gross misrepresentation of the whole spirit and method of the great teacher. Christ had not been educated in any philosophical school, whether Jewish or Greek. There is no evidence that he had any acquaintance with the metaphysical ideas which were floating in the intellectual atmosphere of his time. Not even the rabbinical thought of scholastic Judaism seems to have affected him any further than to draw forth his aversion and antagonism. He did not teach "as the scribes." His whole spirit and method were different from theirs. While they were under the yoke of a theological tradition, he spoke out of the free spontaneous intuitions of his own moral nature. Even less, if possible, was he affected by the various Greek philosophical schools that were beginning to break down the partition walls of Jewish isolation. Neither Palestinian Sadduceeism nor Alexandrian Philonism ever disturbed with their skeptical or mystical clouds the intellectual serenity of his Galilean soul. No wonder that dwellers in Jeru-

salem should have "marveled" as they listened to a gospel so strange to their ears, and should have said: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" And Christ's reported answer shows this at least, that he regarded his gospel not as the product of education or philosophy, but as the immediate offspring of his own moral relation with God: "My teaching is not mine but his that sent me." It is true that Christianity was afterwards developed into a philosophical creed, as is true of all religious ideas, but this historical process cannot be traced to its founder. Paul, as we shall see, was the historical bridge between the "good news" of Jesus of Nazareth and the speculative philosophy of the Nicene Creed.

Nor, again, was the Christianity of Christ a *new system of ethics*. Much has been made of this point in the traditional apologies and polemics. But here, also, historical comparative investigation has disillusioned the whole religious field. If purity of ethics was to be the great test of religious systems, there are other religions that would not suffer greatly when compared with Christianity. Innumerable passages can be quoted from the reputed sayings of Zoroaster, Confucius, Gautama, Socrates, and Plato, inspired with a purity and sweetness of moral temper that strongly remind one of Christ's own teaching. Surely human ethics reaches its highest form in the doctrine of universal love and benevolence, or in the kindred doctrine that the great aim and end of moral life

should be to become like God. Yet the former doctrine is written on every page of Buddhistic literature, while the latter doctrine was emphasized by Plato in words that stir every ethical sentiment of the soul. Christ's "new commandment" that men should love one another was not "new" in history, though he by his own life and teaching gave it a new meaning and power. Righteousness is the central ethical word of the Bible, but where can a purer or more searching delineation of it be found than in the second book of Plato's Republic? To devote one's whole life, even to its end, in a death of martyrdom, to the work of contributing in the highest possible degree to the moral welfare and progress of one's fellow-men, is surely the highest ideal of a moral life; but where can a more touching example of such a life be found than that of Socrates as given in the Memorabilia of Xenophon and in the Phædo of his disciple Plato? Does the life of Jesus of Nazareth, devoted to these same high moral ends, eclipse all others, the secret of its superior attraction does not lie in a new ethics, but elsewhere. What is this secret? What is it that is original and unique in the beginnings of Christianity? There is but one answer, — and he that runs may read it, — when, dismissing all traditional conceptions, one holds up directly before his eyes the actual historical life of Christ and catches the spirit that moved it as a principle and spur of moral action. Surely it was, as Amiel wrote, Christ's "moral

consciousness," full to overflowing of his sense of relationship to God as his Father, and to man as his brother, involving a double mission of obedience to God in doing the work given him to do, and of ministry to men who were equally the children of the common Father in heaven and the common heirs of his love and grace. Here is the headspring of the gospel Christ preached. The parable of the prodigal son sums it all up in one wonderful story. This was the keynote of Christ's messiahship. There was no theology, or philosophy, or ethics in it, but simply a new exposition of the moral character of God and of man's moral relationship to him, — an exposition that was born in the religious consciousness of Jesus himself and filled his life more and more blessedly with its precious revelations. These revelations, brought to light in his own moral experience, were the substance of his teaching. And what was the doctrine that formed its centre and circumference? Simply this: God's moral character is summed up in love, and as such is revealed in all ways to all his moral creatures: and hence the highest form of morality in man, who was made in God's moral image, is to grow in the divine likeness, so that the whole moral law of the gospel is summed up in the "new commandment," "Love one another." Love, then, in Christ's teaching, became the essence of religion. For religion, as its very name indicates, is a binding and unifying principle. Hence its essential element cannot be dogma or

philosophy, which separate into sects and schools. But love, on the contrary, is the great harmonizing force in the moral kingdom, and by it Christ's words are fulfilled "that they all may be one." Moreover, love has in it a moral principle which becomes a passion and inspiration for action. The author of "Ecce Homo" has well described it as "the enthusiasm of humanity." It is not a "dry light" like a metaphysical or ethical formula, but a flame of fire, the fire of a moral nature all alive with a moral consciousness that is in constant living communion with God, and longs to pour out its ardent life in a loving ministry to needy human souls. Here, then, we stand at the fountain head of the Christian religion, and can mark the true beginnings of its history.

Jesus was a Jew of Semitic race. His teaching was in the Hebrew-Aramaic language, a dialect kindred with the Phœnician and Arabic. It is true that a few disciples seem to have been gathered out of the Greek and Roman world into which Judæa had been politically incorporated; but during the life of the founder the proclamation of his gospel was confined to Aramaic Palestine, so that Christianity was, at the outset, an Aramaic Semitic religion. The original apostles were all Jews and of Aramaic speech. It is an interesting though not a practical question, what the fortunes of Christianity would have been had not the dispersion of the Jews in other countries, and especially throughout the Græco-Roman

Empire, brought large numbers of them into close acquaintance with the Greek language and culture. Had Judæa remained closed to outside influences and been kept in political and linguistic isolation, what human probability that the religious reformation attempted by Christ would have succeeded in Palestine or been carried forth into the Greek world? The Jews, we know, rejected him *en masse*, and no avenue would have been opened for the preaching of his gospel to the Gentiles. Christ's religious movement might have been stifled in its very birth. Here are to be seen two of the "divers ways" in which the divine providence has worked in history for the evolution of good to mankind: first, in the wide dispersion of the Jews among the Gentiles, and the breakdown of the political barriers which made them for ages "a peculiar people;" and secondly, in the remarkable training of Paul, who, though a Jew, was born and educated in a Greek city, Tarsus, and thus was made acquainted with both the Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek languages, and also with Jewish-Rabbinic and Greek philosophical ideas. Without Paul, we may say that the whole history of Christianity would have taken an entirely different shape. So much sometimes seems to hang on a single individual. So far as history can speak, no other individual appeared in his day that could have taken his place, or have done the unique work that he did. Never perhaps was the hand of providence more conspicuously revealed in

human affairs. For Paul, as has already been said, was the great historical bridge from a provincial Aramaic religious movement to its œcumenical extension over the world. If Christ was the true founder of the Christian religion, Paul was as truly the founder of the Græco-Roman Christianity. He gave the original Semitic gospel of Jesus its new philosophical setting which prepared the way for its entrance into Aryan thought and faith. This is well illustrated by the term μεσίτης (mediator), which is the central keynote of Paul's theology and which he plainly borrowed from the Greek Platonic Philonism.[1] It was through Paul, the "Apostle to the Gentiles," that Christian churches were planted in the non-Semitic Aryan world, — in other words, among a people who spoke Greek (or Latin) instead of Aramaic. This significant change is marked by the fact that the New Testament has come down to us in Greek rather than in Aramaic-Hebrew. The tradition, whether historical or not, that the gospel, afterwards ascribed to Matthew, was originally written in Hebrew, has a historical basis in this fact. The full significance of such a transfer cannot be realized until it is understood that the centre of political power and the great historical currents which were chiefly to mould the world's future had already passed into the hands of the European Aryan people. The question whether the Semite

[1] See note at the end of this chapter for reply to Dr. Lyman Abbott's criticism on my view of Paul.

or the Aryan should rule and direct the civilization of the human race was settled in the war between Rome and Carthage, when the world's fortunes for the moment seemed to hang in the balance as swayed by the military genius of one man, "the wily Hannibal." The battle of Zama settled the question in favor of the Aryan. Even Mohammed, with his Semitic Arabian religious reaction, was not able to reverse the issue. And as the political and social character of mankind was to be moulded through the Aryan mind, so was it to be with its religion. Paul was himself a true Semitic Jew, but he was born in a Greek city and received an Aryan education, and thus was fitted to translate a Semitic gospel into Aryan forms of thought and speech. It is not needful to dwell at length on the historical consequences of Paul's work. What is here to be kept in view is the fact that this transfer of Christ's religion from Aramaic Palestinian soil to the Aryan Græco-Roman world was a radical and critical point in its whole history, and further that it was brought about wholly by ordinary historical processes. Neander has introduced his "History of the Christian Religion" with an account of what he calls "the preparations for Christianity." No historical religion was ever more wonderfully *prepared for* by thoroughly historical providential movements than Christianity itself. And an appeal to such visible historical preparation is the true basis of every Christian apology.

With the entrance of Christianity into the Greek world, a new chapter in its history begins. It became the religion of Greek communities, and at once was modified by Greek social, political, and philosophical ideas and usages. It is indeed difficult to realize how much is involved in the passage of a religion from one race and language to another wholly distinct race and language. Mr. Flinders-Petrie, in a course of lectures on "Religion in Ancient Egypt," seeking to place his English hearers at the right point of view, well said: "We must feel that the greater part of mankind has had systems of language which would be wholly incapable of expressing our ideas." The reverse, of course, is equally true. The differences between the Semitic and Aryan languages are radical. They belong to two completely distinct types of speech. The very roots and forms of inflection are wholly diverse. Not only so, the histories of the Semitic and Aryan peoples have been on lines as diverse as their languages. Two different types of civilization were developed by them. Here is the historical reason why the Semitic Phœnician Carthaginians could never amalgamate with the Aryan Greeks or Romans when they came into contact. One or the other must yield. In fact, the Aryan race and language showed itself the stronger, both in war and in peace. Equally was the Aryan type of religious thought and faith to prevail in religion. How could it be otherwise? Religious beliefs

have their basis in the ideas of men concerning the cardinal questions of philosophy, namely, the views held concerning the world and man and God. When Christianity entered the sphere of the Greek language and culture, its very philosophy suffered a radical change. Paul himself caught his new philosophical keynote of a mediator, as has been already explained, from his acquaintance with the Greek language and thought. His immediate Christian theological successors, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, were steeped in the Platonic Greek philosophy and drew from it the metaphysical groundwork of their Christian theology. Justin Martyr who was, after Paul, the true founder of that Greek type of Christianity which ultimately prevailed over the original Semitic Ebionitic type, was a Platonic philosopher before he became a Christian, and it is to him that we owe, so far as history sheds light on the subject, the introduction of the logos doctrine into the dogma of the trinity. The effect of this new Greek logos mediation idea was radical. The whole Jewish conception of God and his relations to men which Christ as a Jew had retained in his new gospel was modified, and the Ethnic Greek conception which rested on the need of a metaphysical divine mediation principle supplanted it. Thus Christianity from the middle of the second century passed through a complete metamorphosis and became Aryan to the core. What saved to it a Semitic leaven which remained indeed vital in

many ways, was the fact that the Jewish Old Testament writings, on which Christ had built his religious reform, became the Christian Bible, and has remained an essential part of the sacred books of Christianity down to the present day. The part, however, that was played by the Old Testament in early Christian dogmatics was comparatively small. Thanks to Paul's Greek education and to the Hellenic character of the early Fathers from Justin Martyr to Origen, Christian theology became thoroughly Hellenized. In the course of a century or more, the Semitic religion of Christ was evolved into a completely Aryan form. The full account of this historical movement may be found in my previous book. It is only needful here to remind those who have read it that the central dogma on which everything else hangs is that of Christ as the true logos of God and the divine mediator between God and man; and that this dogma had its historical origin in Greek philosophy.

I have thus made sufficiently clear, I trust, the fact of a close historical connection between the Ethnic religions and Christianity. Christ's gospel sprang out of Judaism, and forms a special chapter in the history of the Old Testament Jewish religion. Judaism in its turn had its historical beginnings in the Ethnic Babylonian-Chaldaic religion of the ancestors of Abraham, who emigrated from "Ur of the Chaldees." With Paul a new chapter begins when the Judean gospel was trans-

lated into the Greek language and thought, and its further history is inextricably mixed with that of Ethnic-Greek religious ideas, at first in the way of opposition, and later in that of combination and absorption. No Christian theologian of the second, third, or fourth centuries can be understood without a full acquaintance with the Ethnic philosophy of his day. This is especially true of those who laid the foundations of the leading Christian philosophical schools, and helped to frame the creeds which became orthodox and œcumenical. Justin Martyr, Origen, Athanasius, Augustine, were first of all philosophical thinkers, building their theories of God, man, and nature on a philosophy which they borrowed from Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and the Stoics. We are thus prepared to proceed to a consideration of the *internal* relations between the Ethnic trinities and the Christian trinitarian dogma.

Note (see p. 208). — A review of "The Evolution of Trinitarianism" in "The Outlook" (December 15, 1900), presumably by Dr. Abbott, takes issue with my view of Paul's mediational Christology. Dr. Abbott declares that I make Paul an Arian. This can be true only in the sense that all the early Fathers were Arians. The *mediation* theory lies at the very foundation of the whole Greek theology. It was drawn, as we have seen, from Plato through Philo, and was fully developed in the logos doctrine. Athanasius held it as strongly as Arius; both were equally dualistic. The question between them was not whether Christ

was a mediator between God and man, but just how much was metaphysically involved in such a function. Both of them held to the subordinationism of Origen, but while Athanasius was disposed to lessen it to a minimum, Arius reacted toward the opposite pole, and thus was led to declare that Christ was not derived from God *by eternal generation*, as Athanasius held, but was a *creature* of God, with a beginning in time, though the highest of all creatures and the instrument of their creation, and hence capable of assuming mediational functions. This is what is known in church history as Arianism. To confound Paul's mediation ideas with the fourth century doctrine of Arius argues a strange want of acquaintance with the history of the evolution of the Greek trinitarianism. Whatever Paul's ideas were concerning the metaphysical character of the relation of Christ to God, he gives no clear theological statement of them. Certainly he was no Arian. The time had not come for such a step. It took three centuries to develop it. Paul was a practical, not a speculative thinker. He laid hold of the dualistic mediation theory as a good practical basis for his faith in Christ as the true Saviour of men. Whether he regarded Christ as metaphysically more than a man is doubted by such scholars as Pfleiderer, and certainly several passages in his Epistles look strongly that way. I refer especially to 1 Timothy ii. 5 and 1 Corinthians xv. 47. But other passages, such as Phil. ii. 5 and 1 Corinthians xi. 3, seem to me to show conclusively that Paul regarded Christ as superhuman and of heavenly origin, though it is equally plain that he never thought of making him identical with God himself, or in any sense an Absolute Being. Thus one class of passages serves to correct and limit the interpretation to be given to another class.

Dr. Abbott criticises my use of 1 Timothy ii. 5, because of its doubtful genuineness. But if 1 Timothy ought not to be quoted in behalf of my view of Paul's Christology, what right has Dr. Abbott to base his own view on another passage in the next chapter of the same Epistle? He defends his use of it by declaring that it "has been rightly accepted as a true summary of the Apostolic doctrine," but such a defense would be equally good for my use of the famous passage "There is one God, one mediator between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus:" for it gave the key-note to the later Greek Christology, though, as I have shown, the term μεσίτης (mediator) gave way to another Philonic word, logos, which became the common term for Christ as mediator. Thus Athanasius employs the term μεσίτης but once, so far as I am aware, while the term logos is sprinkled all over his writings. But I am not so ready to give up the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles as Dr. Abbott seems to be. No letters of Paul are more full of internal evidence of Pauline authorship. The Pauline flavor runs all through them. Take the passage, "For I am ready to be offered," etc.; if Paul did not write it, my faith in the authenticity of all the so-called Pauline Epistles would be greatly shaken. I am quite ready to believe that these Epistles have suffered interpolation along with other New Testament writings; but there is not the slightest evidence of the interpolation of 1 Tim. ii. 5. In fact, it is to my mind a decisive proof of its genuineness that it harmonizes so completely with Paul's other Epistles which are full of the mediation view, with its natural corollaries of subordination and personal distinction. And this, I take it, is the real point of Dr. Abbott's objection to my interpretation of Paul's Christology. He holds that "The New Trinita-

rianism" was Paul's trinitarianism, namely, that Christ was the manifestation of God in the flesh, in the sense that God's real being and divinity was incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth, so that, so far as Christ was divine, his divinity was identical with God's divinity. Hence his dislike of the μεσίτης (mediator) doctrine, which as a Platonic dualistic theory has always in Greek trinitarianism involved a metaphysical subordination of the second person to the first person. Dr. Abbott thinks that on this point I "misunderstand Paul and also the modern trinitarianism," and he believes that "orthodoxy has returned, after traveling a long circuit, to the spirit of Paul." This may be so, but surely not in Dr. Abbott's way. To make Paul square with "Modern Trinitarianism" one must do exegetical violence to the whole drift of Paul's teachings. Take the famous Kenotic passage in Phil. ii. To make it harmonize with Dr. Abbott's view, one must distort it from end to end. Its plain natural meaning is that Christ, as subordinate to God, though of divine nature, obediently accepted the mediatorial function and became incarnate, and as man humbled himself to die on the cross; and that *on this account God "highly exalted him*," etc. This is the historical Christian doctrine of mediatorship as held by all the early Greek Fathers, including Arius and Athanasius. To read into this passage the Augustinian Sabellianism or the latest "New Trinitarianism" would require a heroic exercise of exegetical dexterity. Let me suggest one passage more for Dr. Abbott's consideration, which sheds an interesting sidelight on this subject, — 1 Corinthians xi. 3: "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." The key to the understanding of this is Paul's view of woman as *inferior in nature* to man

and therefore subject to him. This is made clear by what follows. Hence Paul's four orders of being: woman, man, Christ, God. As man is superior to woman, so Christ is superior in nature to man, and God superior to Christ. The logic here is perfectly plain and complete, and it lets us into the very heart of Paul's Christology.

Leaving out of view the Philonic μεσίτης in 1 Tim. ii. 5, Paul's mediation doctrine stands out clearly in his teaching. In fact, the evidence of a Greek Philonic influence in the Epistles that are universally accepted as genuine is so strong that the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles is amply sustained in their use of the term μεσίτης. Paul uses other Philonic expressions besides this one. For example, 1 Corinthians xv. 47, "The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is of heaven" is a direct reminiscence of Philo, who says: "There are two kinds of men. The one man is heavenly, the other is of the earth" (Philonis Opera, i. 50). In the eighth chapter of the same Epistle there is another clear Philonic expression: "One Lord Jesus Christ, *through whom are all things*." This view of Christ as the mediating instrument of creation is precisely the doctrine of Philo concerning the Logos, and the only difference between Paul and Philo is that Paul puts Christ in place of the Logos (Philonis Opera, i. 162). The very passage in 2 Corinthians v. 18, 19, a portion of which Dr. Abbott quotes as "the keynote of Paul's doctrine," "all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ," etc., has a thoroughly Philonic ring, making the Philonic distinction between God as the originating cause (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ), and Christ as the instrumental means (διὰ χριστοῦ) of redemption. Philo makes much of this distinction between ἐκ (from) and διά (through), deriving it from Aristotle.

Thus much in vindication of my view of Paul's mediation theory. It was Augustine who through his ignorance of Greek theology paved the way for a Sabellian doctrine that broke down the very foundations of the Pauline Greek mediation view. I have illustrated this in my discussion of Anselm's theory of the atonement. "The New Trinitarianism" follows the same lead. It has no real mediation doctrine simply because it has no ground on which it can rest.

Dr. Abbott regards my account of the evolution of Trinitarianism as "fatally defective" because I have "failed," as he thinks, "in my interpretation of Paul." His argument here is at least curious. Paul, he holds, is "the starting-point of the Christological evolution." Failure to start right vitiates all that follows. But suppose that Paul is *not* the historical point of departure, what then? Now, rightly or wrongly, my starting-point of all Christian history is Christ himself. How can the evolution of Christology be made to begin with Paul, who never saw Christ and whose Apostolic calling was at least half a generation after Christ's death? Behind Paul was Christ's own messianic career and the traditions of his teaching which are gathered up in the Acts and Synoptic gospels. "The fatal defect" of Dr. Abbott's whole criticism is its "failure" to interpret correctly the historical environment of early Christianity. Biblical exegesis walks with uncertain steps without the aid of history to illuminate its path. See a suggestive article in the "Biblical World," March, 1901, by Prof. B. W. Bacon, on "Exegesis as a Historical Study."

CHAPTER II

THE INTERNAL RELATIONS — RESEMBLANCES

As soon as a direct comparison is instituted between the Ethnic trinities and the Christian trinity, it immediately strikes the observer that all these trinities fall alike under the common law of historical evolution. We have seen how true this is of the Ethnic trinities, and it is equally true of the Christian dogma. Every trinitarian theory of God that has ever been developed has started either from a polytheistic or from a monotheistic doctrinal basis. The Ethnic trinities, as a rule, formed a stage in the movement from plurality to unity, though there were exceptions in the case of the philosophical trinities, such as the Hindoo and the Plotinian, where, in a pantheistic way, the movement was from unity to trinity. The Christian dogma did not start from a polytheistic or pantheistic ground, but from Jewish monotheism; but the development from one God to a trinity was just as completely a historical evolution as any other. This has already been fully set forth in "A Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism," especially in respect to the second person. Readers of that book will remember how completely in the background was the question of the

third person. As was there noted, the Christian dogma of the trinity had its spring in the theory, borrowed from Greek philosophy, of the need of a mediator (μεσίτης) between man and God, and in the ascription to Jesus Christ of such a nature and function. This was the new view introduced by Paul into Christian theology, which grew afterward into the logos doctrine, in the hands of Justin Martyr and his successors. Thus Christianity theologically is essentially a *Christology*, or doctrine of Christ as a second person in the Godhead. Indeed, strange as it may appear, had it not been for the natural and historical tendency seen in all trinitarian movements toward the evolution of duality into triality, the Christian doctrine of God might have remained that of a "duad" instead of a "triad." The same may be asserted of every Ethnic trinity. In the Egyptian and the Babylonian trinities there was constant action and reaction from triality to duality and vice versa, — polytheism tending to reduce itself to triality and then to duality, and finally to unity; and conversely the doctrine of one God resolving itself into that of a duad, and in turn into that of a triad, and thus paving the way for a return to the polytheistic belief which has ever haunted the race. In fact, the religious consciousness of man has always fluctuated, like a pendulum, between the two extremes of polytheism and monotheism in its conception of divinity, according as its sense of the plurality of natural phenomena and forces has

swayed its emotions and thoughts, or as its more educated sense of the unity of nature and natural law, and of God as its author, has determined its philosophy.

A vivid picture of this evolutionary uncertainty and fluctuation is given in the Babylonian epic of creation, — of very early though uncertain date, — where chaos with its mass of multiplied unorganized elements is personified in Tiamat, who is made the progenitor of Lakmu and Lakamu. These divinities, representing the "monster" world of half-chaotic things, became in their turn the ancestors of Anschar and Kisha, who represent a second stage of movement toward order, and from whom springs the great Babylonian triad of Anu, Bel, and Ea. It is through this triad of gods that the third stage of evolution takes place, namely, the creation of the world. Behind this picture lies a complete polytheism which forms its substantial background. Plainly, when this epic was written, the Babylonian triad had already been evolved, and a place had to be found for it among the earlier traditions. The epic reveals the manner in which it was done. Chaotic multiplicity is mythologically personified in Tiamat, the principle of disorder; and then, through two successive rising stages of evolution, two pairs of nature gods are formed, who are made the progenitors of Anu, Bel, and Ea. Other examples might be given. In fact, the Ethnic trinities are shown to be in a continued state of flux, not only from duality to trin-

ity or quarternity, or to multiples of a triad, but also from one triad to another, as in Hindooism, from Varuna, Indra, and Agni to Brahma, Vishnu, and Civa, and in the Greek world, from Zeus, Here, and Athene, to Zeus, Athene, and Apollo, and then to the philosophical Plotinian triad of τὸ ἕν, ὁ νοῦς, ἡ ψυχή. The remarkable thing about it all is that the idea of trinity is so persistent, holding its ground tenaciously, while so Proteuslike in the shapes it assumes. The same is substantially true of the Christian trinity; of course not so fully or with so much of fluctuation, for polytheism affords a much wider field of change than monotheism, but the *fact of constant evolution* is just as clear and decisive.

I propose to illustrate this now in the case of the *third* person, the Holy Spirit, especially in its earlier evolution. As the idea of trinity is not to be found in the Old Testament, which is strictly monotheistic, it is needless to enter into any discussion as to the meaning of the expression Holy Spirit in that part of the Bible. Enough to say that it is never used by itself to express a person. When employed it is always an adjunct, as in the passage, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." The "Holy Spirit of God" is a monotheistic paraphrase of God himself. This is the Old Testament doctrine throughout. In the New Testament we first find "the Holy Spirit" used separately, but its adjunctive or adjectival use still continues, and indicates the real meaning of the expression

when used separately, as in the clause: "God is a spirit." Certainly Christ nowhere employed the expression in any way to indicate that he believed in the personality of the Holy Spirit as distinguished from the personality of God. This is shown by his interchange of the phrases "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of God." Let it be noted here that the reduction of the gospel to writing was made long after Christ's day, and that meanwhile the form of Christian tradition was undergoing a clear process of evolution. This, no doubt, has not a little to do with the history of the expression "Holy Spirit." But even the Synoptic gospels, as we have them, still continue the Old Testament monotheistic tradition, and Professor Cary ("Synoptic Gospels," p. 29) justly says: "'Holy Spirit' throughout the Synoptics is equivalent to the 'Spirit of God' or 'the divine Spirit,' spoken of here in verse 35 (Luke) as the power of the Most High. Never has the Hebrew mind been able to accept the idea of a division of personality in the divine nature, neither had the conception of a personal Holy Spirit been developed in the Christian church at the time of the writing of our gospels. It is not to be lost sight of that we have here to deal with ideas held by men who were Jews before they were Christians." Let me add in support of Professor Cary's statement, that the Talmud, which represents Jewish orthodox tradition as far back as Christ's day, and surely cannot be taxed with any trinitarian tendencies, again and

again uses the expression "Holy Spirit" as equivalent to the spirit of God. For example, "Through the reward of faith the Holy Spirit rested upon Israel;" where "Holy Spirit" is plainly synonymous with God's active immanent presence and blessing. Paul is here an important witness, since he lived before the gospels were written. Not only does Paul use the terms "Holy Spirit," "Spirit of God," "Spirit of Christ," interchangeably, and without any apparent difference of meaning, but on two separate occasions, when he gives his doctrine of God in a thoroughly formal and credal way, he ignores the Holy Spirit entirely. (1 Cor. viii. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5). How could he do this, if he held to a trinity of divine persons? Paul's theology of God was the Jewish monotheism of his ancestors; but he added to it his new doctrine of Christ: "There is one God, one mediator also between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus." It is true that there are in Paul's Epistles a few passages that might bear a trinitarian meaning if supported by more direct evidence. But such corroborative evidence is wanting. No one can read those Epistles and note how frequently and closely Paul connects the Spirit with God and with Christ, without feeling assured that he had no clearly defined doctrine of the Spirit as a distinct Person. When the expression Spirit or Holy Spirit is used separately, the context always makes it clear that God or Christ is intended. Take, for example, Romans viii. 9, 14, 16: "The

Spirit himself beareth witness," is explained by the previous clause, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God," and by a still earlier passage, "if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." A similar passage occurs in 1 Cor. ii. 10–14. The fact that Paul had no decided trinitarian view is well illustrated in 1 Cor. vi. 11: "But ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God." Surely here was a fine opportunity to turn the duad into a triad, but Paul ignores it, and plainly because in his view the sanctifying and justifying power of God is specially manifested in him as a Holy Spirit. An equally good opportunity was given in 2 Tim. iv. 1: "I charge thee in the sight of God and of Jesus Christ," but Paul does not add "and of the Holy Spirit." Still, it seems probable that already in Paul's day the tendency was growing to invest the Spirit of God with personal attributes. And there is a single passage in Paul's Epistles where this trinitarian tendency is plainly hovering over the apostle's mind. I refer to the trinitarian benediction (2 Cor. xii. 14). If this is not a later interpolation, it bears marks that cannot be easily overlooked of a well-defined trinitarianism.

But supposing it to be genuine, and an indication of Paul's trinitarian tendency, one cannot help asking why such a benediction was never repeated. Why were all Paul's other benedictions in the name of God, or of Christ, or of both?

And then, further, why was every doxology of Paul, without a single exception, addressed to God alone? There is but one satisfactory answer. Paul believed in "one God" and in the one Holy Spirit of God. Christ was for him a mediator between God and men, but not God himself. As such a mediator Christ was a proper object of intercessory prayer. God was properly addressed in Christ's name. But God alone was the one object of worship and praise. Hence every doxology was to him. On the whole, without entering upon a fuller critical discussion of New Testament texts, it can be said without hesitation, that while a clear tendency is discernible in the New Testament writings towards a trinitarian view of God culminating in the Fourth Gospel, of which I shall speak later, there is no evidence outside of that gospel of any distinctly developed doctrine of the Holy Spirit as a third person in a trinity. Whether this tendency is regarded as greater or less, the only historical result that can be relied on is that an evolution is begun which will naturally complete itself in the fully developed trinity of the fourth century.

This conclusion is amply sustained by the evidence of the earliest post-apostolic Fathers. Especially important are the Epistles of Clement, Barnabas, and Polycarp, and "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles." These four writings I have placed in their probable chronological order, though some critics would assign an earlier date

to the "Teaching." The Epistle of Clement is undoubtedly the earliest post-apostolic document that has come down to us. Lightfoot fixes its date "about the year 95." In many ways this Epistle is of great importance. It shows that the gospel was still largely communicated orally. No clear sign is given of aquaintance with our present four gospels, though the writer may have had some apocryphal gospel in his hands. By the "Scriptures" he always means the Old Testament. Thus proof is furnished, which other evidence of the same nature makes entirely convincing, that our present gospels were written after a considerable traditional evolution of the Christian faith had already taken place.

On the question of the Holy Spirit the evidence of Clement is quite indefinite. The expression "Holy Spirit" is used several times in the plain sense of the spirit of God or of Christ, as when the Old Testament Scriptures are described as the "true utterances of the Holy Spirit," and when the apostolic preachers are said to have been "proved by the Spirit." There is also one passage in the newly discovered portion of the Epistle which has a decided trinitarian ring and indicates the tendency which was in the air towards the later trinitarian dogma: "As God liveth, and the Lord Jesus Christ liveth, and the Holy Spirit." This surely proves, if it be genuine, that the trinitarian idea was growing. But, on the other hand, it is equally clear that a trinity has not yet

been fully developed, for the two doxologies are strictly monotheistic, and the benedictions at the beginning and end of the Epistle make no allusion to the Holy Spirit, though both God and Christ are mentioned. This view that the trinitarian evolution is only begun, especially in the case of the third person, is supported by the testimony of the Epistles of Polycarp and of Barnabas, which belong to the second quarter of the second century. In neither of these Epistles is there any reference to the Holy Spirit or to a trinity. The benedictions are not trinitarian. The Epistle of Polycarp begins: "Peace from God Almighty and from the Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied," and the conclusion is similar. The Epistle of Barnabas begins and ends with a simple Christian salutation. Both of these Epistles have a thoroughly primitive air. Neither refers to John or the Fourth Gospel, nor is any gospel named; but Christ's sayings are quoted as if from oral tradition, for example: "As the Lord said, 'The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.'" There is, indeed, in the present text of Barnabas an apparent exception: "As it is written, 'Many are called, but few are chosen,'" but its genuineness is very doubtful. If it is not an interpolation, it is "the first example in the writings of the Fathers of a citation from any book of the New Testament preceded by the authoritative formula 'it is written.'"[1] But if Barnabas really

[1] *Apostolic Fathers*, T. and T. Clark, p. 107.

was acquainted with any written gospel, is it not strange that he gives no other sign of acquaintance, either by mention or by a clear citation? The fact is that there is no evidence of the growth of a New Testament canon till the time of Justin Martyr. Whenever in the earlier Fathers the expression "the Scripture" is employed, the reference is to the Old Testament. Passages are also given which are plainly from apocryphal books. Polycarp, indeed, exhibits a thorough acquaintance with Paul's Epistles and quotes freely from them, — a fact which makes the absence of quotation from any gospel still more noticeable. I have dwelt on these points as helping to show how uncertain and fluxive is the general condition of Christian thought and belief a hundred years after Christ's death. If any one of the four gospels is known, it is not directly referred to, or certainly quoted from, neither is the name of any author given. The same indefinite and fluxive character is seen in the trinitarian development. Polycarp and Barnabas represent a sort of half-way house from monotheism to trinitarianism. They hold to one God and one Lord Jesus, but go no further.

"The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" is closely connected with the Epistle of Barnabas in general character. In some respects it seems the most primitive of all the post-apostolic writings, reminding one of the Book of Acts. As in that book, Christ is again and again called God's

"servant Jesus" (παῖς). The indications of dependence on oral tradition rather than on written gospels are clear and decided. Christ's teaching is always referred to as "the gospel," and the plural "gospels" is never employed, as came to be the case when the gospel was reduced to writing by several hands. The passage from oral to written tradition may be gauged quite accurately by this mark. The singular term gospel is employed by all the post-apostolic Fathers until Justin Martyr, who is the first to refer to certain gospels which he calls "Memoirs of the Apostles." Other evidence, as that of Papias, shows that this was the very period when oral tradition was giving place to written gospels. I cannot accept, therefore, the judgment of several recent critics, that the clause at the close of chapter xv., "So do ye, as ye have it (ἔχετε) in the gospel of our Lord," is an allusion to a written gospel. The verb ἔχετε simply indicates present possession, but gives no direct clue to the manner in which such possession was attained. Such a clause has little weight against the whole tenor of "The Teaching," which continually refers to Christ himself and his prophets and apostles as the sources of the teaching: "The Lord commandeth;" "The Lord hath said;" "Him that speaketh to thee the word of the Lord," etc. The prominence given in "The Teaching" to the work of "apostles and prophets" and to exhortations as to the way in which they were to be received affords strong evidence

that the teaching of the gospel was oral rather than written. "Whoever cometh and teacheth you *all these things, before spoken*, receive him."

Examining now the "The Teaching" for light on the question of its trinitarianism, we find it in close agreement with the Epistles of Clement, Polycarp, and Barnabas. With the exception of a single passage, to which I shall soon refer, it indicates the same indefinite and inchoate character. Its doctrine of God is strictly monotheistic. No trace appears of the Pauline Greek "mediator" element. Christ is the servant of God and the Lord or master of his disciples. It is the Palestinian Messianism, not the Alexandrian Logos doctrine. The doxologies are addressed to God alone. Only in a single passage is there a hint of a trinitarian tendency, namely, in the formula of baptism, which appears for the first time in complete trinitarian form: "Baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." When or how this formula originated is wholly unknown. The only sign of it in the New Testament is in Mat. xxviii. 19, where Christ is represented as giving it to his disciples. The plainly unhistorical character of this passage is proved by the fact that after Christ's death the form of baptism was "into Christ" and not into the Trinity. Paul knows nothing of the trinitarian formula. It thus becomes evident that the verse at the close of Matthew is an interpolation of a later time, or that the whole gospel in its present

shape was composed well on in the second century; and this agrees with the indirect and negative testimony of the Epistles of Clement, Polycarp, and Barnabas.

It may here be noted that the evolution of Christian trinitarianism is mainly traceable along three lines of evidence: the form of benediction, the baptismal formula, and the developing creed of the church; and it will be found that the order above given is in fact the chronological order of comparative evolution. Paul gets as far once as a trinitarian benediction, though he never alludes to the trinitarian formula of baptism or suggests any trinitarian creed. So "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" gives the trinitarian baptismal formula, but is altogether silent as to the doctrine of the trinity.

It is an interesting question in this connection, when the so-called Apostles' Creed was originally written, and what was its first form. Its name rests entirely on legendary ground. In its present shape it is as late as the seventh or eighth century. Professor Sanday's suggestion that there was an earlier creed behind it is quite probable, but if so, it is now lost. The earliest form of a creed that is similar in character to the Apostles' Creed is found in Irenæus, in the latter part of the second century, and a like form is also given in Tertullian a little later. There is no reference, however, in either of these writers to the "Apostles' Creed," as would naturally have been the case had the

tradition of such a creed with apostolic authority been in vogue in that day. Irenæus expressly declared that his creed was generally accepted by the church. How eagerly would he have appealed to the authority of the apostles, had the creed put forth in their names been already extant! While, therefore, the materials of the Apostles' Creed were undoubtedly gathering in the course of the second century, the creed itself, even in its original form, cannot be assigned to an earlier date than the third century. The significance of this creed lies in the fact that it is based in its very form as well as substance on the trinitarian conception. Its twelve clauses (according to the legend, contributed by the twelve apostles) are subdivided into three parts, each revolving around one of the three persons of the trinity. The traditional title of this creed has undoubtedly had largely to do with the veneration that has been accorded to it in the Western church since it came into general use in the early Middle Ages. But the belief that it represents the real creed of the church of the early post-apostolic age must be given up. It is a Latin, not a Greek, confession, and is undoubtedly an offshoot of the growing creed of the Roman church. The Greek church knew nothing of it, as was declared in the Council of Florence in the fifteenth century, when an effort was made to heal the schism between the Greek and Latin churches. To say, as Dr. Schaff has done, in his History of the Church: "The Apostles' Creed in

its present shape is post-apostolic; but in its contents and spirit truly apostolic," conveys a wholly false impression as to the real facts. It is neither apostolic nor post-apostolic in the historical meaning of that term. No early Greek Father makes any allusion to it. Its thoroughly trinitarian character makes it a historical anachronism when dated at any point earlier than Irenæus, about 180. I have introduced the question of the Apostles' Creed, so called, here, — though properly it should come in later, as representing a later stage of evolution, — because the traditional idea of it, which is wholly unhistorical, is so ingrained in the popular Christian mind. The impression is widely spread to-day that, whatever view may be taken of the Nicene and other later creeds, the Apostles' Creed is essentially apostolic, and contains essential gospel truth. Christian scholars like Dr. Schaff, who show in their writings that they are aware of the facts, have helped to perpetuate this mistaken view, in the interests, I suppose, of what they regard as "the faith once delivered." Dr. Schaff declares that "it has the authority of antiquity and the dew of perennial youth beyond any other document of post-apostolic times, and is the only strictly œcumenical creed of the West, as the Nicene Creed is the only œcumenical creed of the East." In the last clause of this statement Dr. Schaff has innocently given proof that his own assertion was false. How about the "œcumenical" standing of the Apostles' Creed

in *the East?* And if it was *not* "œcumenical in the East," how could it have "the authority of antiquity"? Dr. Schaff has simply made a historical jump of several centuries without any adequate evidence to sustain it. It is a pure leap in the air. The so-called Apostles' Creed represents, not an original dogma of the gospel, but an evolutionary development that did not reach its full limit until it appeared as a Latin creed of the Western church in the eighth century. Before leaving this special topic and returning to the historical survey of the growth of early apostolic trinitarianism, I would add that, if any one wishes to gain a vivid idea of the evolutionary character of creeds, let him read a small book by an English Oxford scholar of conservative instincts, C. A. Heartley, entitled, "Harmonia Symbolica," which gives a full account of the slow and hesitating way in which the creeds of Christendom, especially the Western, were developed.

To return, we have found in the first stage of the post-apostolic period, as represented by Clement, Polycarp, Barnabas, and "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," only sporadic tendencies toward a trinitarian view of God. These tendencies we have noted along three lines of movement, namely, the Christian benediction, the formula of baptism, and the growth of the trinitarian dogma. Everything has thus far been tentative and fluxive. Nothing like a "creed" has yet been attempted. The benediction and doxology are still

monotheistic. The baptismal formula has become changed in *one single instance*, we know not how or just when, from "into Christ" to "into the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost." There is one further piece of evidence left us in the first period which has a unique significance and interest. No documents of this early age have been more the subject of controversy, as to their authenticity and historical authority, than the Ignatian Epistles. The conclusion of Bishop Lightfoot is certainly one that conservative scholars to-day generally accept, namely, that the seven *longer* Epistles have been so largely interpolated as to have lost all independent authority; but that the *shorter* Epistles are genuine and historical documents. I am not ready myself to accept the historicity of the shorter Epistles, for they bear unmistakable traces of legend as well as interpolation; but surely there can be no doubt as to the strength of Lightfoot's destructive criticism in the case of the longer Epistles. Assuming, then, that these Epistles represent an interpolated and amended recension of the shorter ones, let us consult them for the light they may shed on the points before us. First, on the trinitarian tendency of the Christian benediction. Three of the seven Epistles close in this way, and, in the longer version of all of them, the Holy Spirit is included with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, while it is absent from all three in the earlier shorter Epistles. Take the Epistle to the Ephesians, for example. The

shorter version reads: "Farewell in God the Father and in Jesus Christ, our common hope." In the longer form there is added "and in the Holy Ghost." In the Epistle to the Philadelphians the shorter version reads: "Fare ye well in Christ Jesus, our common Lord:" the longer version reads: "Fare ye well in the Lord Jesus Christ, our common hope in the Holy Ghost." The Epistle to the Smyrnians gives a further evolution: "Fare ye well in the grace of God" becomes "Fare ye well in the grace of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, being filled with the Holy Spirit and divine and sacred wisdom." The close of another Epistle, namely, that to the Magnesians, makes clear the real doctrine of the shorter Epistles: "Fare ye well in the harmony of God, and possess ye a steadfast spirit which is Jesus Christ" (Lightfoot's translation). There is no allusion here to any third person. But the longer version gives a trinitarian twist to the original text: "Fare ye well in harmony, ye who have obtained the steadfast Spirit, in Jesus Christ, by the will of God."

If now we turn our attention to the line of development of the trinitarian dogma in its *creed* form, we shall find a similar evolution. There are one or two suggestions of a trinity in the shorter Epistles, but in the longer Epistles there are complete trinitarian statements which are wholly wanting in the shorter. For example: "If any one confesses the Father and the Son and the Holy

Spirit" (Phil. vi.). Again, "The Comforter is holy and the Word is Holy, the Son of the Father." Perhaps the most remarkable passage is the following, which has a suggestive credal air: "Since there is but one unbegotten being, God, even the Father, and one only-begotten Son, God, the Word and man, and one Comforter, the Spirit of truth" (Phil. iv.). No one who is at all acquainted with early church history can help noting the strangeness of such dogmatic language, put in the mouth of a Christian bishop who was supposed to have died a martyr in the opening years of the second century. Two words in these statements prove conclusively that they are interpolations, — "Comforter" and "Word." Neither of these terms is ever used in the shorter Epistles. Moreover, they do not appear in any authentic writing till nearly two generations after the supposed date of the Ignatian Epistles. I shall refer to this matter later, and will only add here that I know of no more striking and conclusive testimony to the incomplete and fluxive character of the early trinitarianism than the results brought before us by the comparative study of the Ignatian Epistles. In truth, the transparent interpolations of the longer Epistles are suggestive indications and omens of the great movement which will mark the next stage of evolution which we are now to consider, namely, that *from a duad to a triad*, brought about by the influence of Greek philosophy.

This stage is represented in its origin by Justin

Martyr, about the middle of the second century. As my present object is not to trace the whole trinitarian evolution, but simply that of the third person, I shall omit any detailed account of the introduction by Justin Martyr and his immediate successors of the Greek logos doctrine into Christian theology. This is the real philosophical basis of Christian trinitarianism. Henceforth what was before indefinite and fluxive tends to become definite and fixed, since it has found a philosophical centre around which to revolve. From the time of Justin the doctrine of the second person assumes the dogmatic mould which it has substantially preserved ever since. The later Nicene discussions all assumed the logos doctrine, but developed differences as to its precise theological character. Not so with the question of the third person. The word trinity does not appear until Theophilus (168–188), who for the first time employs the term τριάς, which corresponds to the Latin *trinitas*. Still, the tendency towards a dogmatic trinitarian statement is greatly strengthened by the new logos doctrine. Justin Martyr himself makes one distinct allusion to three persons: "Having learned that Jesus Christ is the son of the true God himself, and holding him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third" (1 Apol. xiii.). He also gives the baptismal trinitarian formula in his account of the mode of baptism (1 Apol. lxi.). But the trinitarian dogma still sits lightly on him, as is shown by another passage in the same

Apology (vi.), where, in refuting the charge of atheism, he mentions the various objects of Christian worship: "God, and the Son who came forth from him, and the host of good angels who follow and are made like to him, and the prophetic Spirit." Here the order of superiority seems clearly to be given, and the Holy Spirit is plainly viewed as a sort of heavenly messenger rather than as a member of the trinity. Dogmatic writers have attempted to give another translation of this passage, but such a begging of the question is foolish and vain. Neander explains it rightly as showing a "wavering" on Justin's part "between the idea of the Holy Spirit, as one of the members of the Triad, and a spirit standing in some relationship with the angels." This question whether the Holy Spirit is a divine member of the trinity or a creature was long debated in the early church, and was not dogmatically settled till the Nicene age. Origen as well as Arius held that the Holy Spirit was a creature, with a beginning in time. It is notable that Justin, while making much of the logos doctrine, as regards the second person, makes no mention of the Paraclete, or Comforter. This is very significant, as showing that the doctrine of the third person is much less in discussion than that of the second. Surely, if the doctrine of the third person were at the front, and the Fourth Gospel was also in their hands, Justin, Athanagoras, Tatian, or Theophilus would have made use of the remarkable fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of that

gospel. But this is not the case. Irenæus is the first among the early Fathers to allude to the Paraclete and to quote from the Fourth Gospel in connection with it. It is also a fact worthy of attention that Irenæus is the first Father to give a distinct creed or dogmatic formula on a trinitarian basis. The church Fathers from Justin Martyr to Irenæus hold steadfastly to the logos doctrine, but waver concerning the dogma of the third person. Athanagoras in a remarkable passage says: "The Holy Spirit himself also, which operates in the prophets, we assert to be an effluence of God, flowing from him and returning back again like a beam of the sun." This certainly is far from the fully developed Nicene doctrine, and strikingly suggests the coming Sabellianism that already lurks in the air. A little later, Theophilus of Antioch gives us another curious illustration of the still undeveloped character of the doctrine of God, especially as regards the third person. He is giving an account of the successive days of creation: "In like manner also the three days which were before the luminaries are types of the trinity of God and his Word and his Wisdom." Here, to be sure, there is a full trinity; but the Holy Spirit is left wholly out, and its place is taken by a term which was often applied to the second person, but never, so far as I am aware, to the Holy Spirit in a personal sense. In another passage Theophilus describes the Logos, or second person, as "the Spirit of God and governing principle and wisdom."

But all this wavering and uncertainty ends with Irenæus; and I need not pursue the subject further, except to say in general that a *third* stage of evolution begins with him, in which the doctrine of a full trinity, including the Holy Spirit as a personal divine though subordinate being, is dogmatically set forth in creed definitions. Prominent in this stage, especially at first, is the use of the Fourth Gospel and its doctrine of the Paraclete. Tertullian, whose Montanism led him to make much of the Fourth Gospel, was a stout opponent of all anti-trinitarian ideas, which were now rife in the church. In short, we have now, in the third century, entered the era of dogmatic controversy, which will continue on into the Nicene and post-Nicene age. In this controversial period, which is characterized by the influence of the mystical Fourth Gospel, and by the deep infusion of the speculative spirit of Greek philosophy, Origen had a conspicuous place. He was the first to unfold, on the basis of the Fourth Gospel, the doctrine of the "Holy Spirit, whom our Lord and Saviour in the Gospel according to John has named the Paraclete." Christ, in his description of the Paraclete, according to Origen, "wished to enlighten his disciples regarding the nature and faith of the trinity." The whole chapter in the work De Principiis (B. II. c. vi.) is of great historical significance, and may be said to have laid the foundation of the completed dogma concerning the Holy Ghost as the third person, which appears in the Niceno-

Constantinopolitan creed. Yet it must not be forgotten that Origen held the Holy Spirit to be a creature, occupying a midway position between God and man, and not to be for a moment confounded, any more than the second person, the Logos of God, with the eternal God himself. Origen was what might be fitly termed a *monotheistic trinitarian*, as Paul might be styled a *monotheistic dualist*, and he thus represents the half-way movement of the pendulum from the position of Paul to that of Athanasius.

My aim in following the history of the third person of the Christian trinity thus far has been to illustrate the fact that the law of historical evolution is common to all trinitarian ideas. Such a common law, working alike in the Ethnic and Christian trinities, must involve further radical resemblances. The truth is that the fundamental religious ideas that are to be found in all the historical religions are the outgrowth of a common religious nature in man, and we may therefore expect to find common religious elements in all such religions, however diversified they may become under varied providential environments and influences. This is just as true of trinitarian ideas as of any other form of dogma. We are prepared, then, to find that the fundamental causes which led to the development of the Ethnic trinities have worked equally in the evolution of the Christian trinity. We found three fundamental grounds or causes of the trinitarian evolution in the Ethnic religions,

namely, (1) *the peculiar sacredness attaching to three as a number* in the early ideas of men; (2) *the family or generative principle*, which lies at the very basis of human life and society; (3) *the mediation theory*, which grew out of the sense of distance of man from God, and of the need of some go-between who should be the medium of prayers and gifts. Were we wholly unacquainted with the history of the Christian religion, we should expect to find in it, after our historical survey of the Ethnic trinities, the same general principles and causes working toward a trinitarian doctrine of God. The Christian trinity, in fact, is not only historically connected with the Ethnic trinities, but has also an intimate logical and internal relationship. The causes that contributed in the most marked degree to the development of the Ethnic trinities are equally visible in the history of the Christian dogma. This comparison, in order to be made clear and definite, will necessitate a cursory *résumé* of some of our previous studies.

It is impossible, as we have said, to trace the triadal or triple idea, in its connection with the gods, to its historical source. It lies behind all historical records. So the special occult significance or sacredness of certain numbers seems to be one of the earliest traditions of the race. The traditions in Genesis in regard to the origin of the Sabbath show how early seven must have become a specially sacred number. The explanation there

given, in the account of creation, is of course wholly mythological and unscientific: it assumes a creation of the world in six days and a resting of God afterwards, as if he could become weary. How unhistorical this assumption is I need not say, in the light of recent scientific discoveries. The real explanation of the sacredness of seven is to be found in a growing sense of the occult power of certain numbers, especially odd ones, as compared with even. The superstitions that gathered in the ancient world around the supposed lucky character of odd numbers, and the unlucky character of even ones, form one of the most curious chapters in history. It was not a mere conceit of Virgil that led him to say: "God takes delight in odd numbers." He was voicing a deep-seated sentiment that had come down from prehistoric times. Roman life and tradition was full of it. The calendar was arranged in obedience to it. "Five wax candles" were scrupulously used at weddings. The steps leading to temples dedicated to religion were made of unequal numbers, as if the entrance itself to sacred places might thus be consecrated and become a sort of *via sacra*. The number three, as among so many peoples, was regarded as peculiarly mystical and sacred.[1] The remarkable division of the Etruscan temples into three parts with three doors was apparently the result of the same superstitious feeling concerning three as an odd or lucky and in a peculiar sense

[1] See Granger's *Worship of the Romans*, p. 150.

divine number. We are thus prepared to join three with seven as peculiarly sacred in the eyes of the earliest races. But other numbers were also singled out as notably significant. The Pythagorean philosophy, which gives us the earliest theory of number, singles out 3, 7, and 10 as perhaps the most occult and sacred of all, — 10, though an even number, being compounded of the first four digits ($1+2+3+4=10$). Three and ten were specially distinguished as the perfect numbers, — three because it contains "the beginning, the middle, and the end," and ten because it includes in itself the whole essence of number. The celebrated "Tetractys," or quaternary number, which was made up of the addition of the first four digits, equaling ten, had a mystical meaning and power, as being "the source and root of the eternal nature," and hence became the usual form of the Pythagorean oath. It is plain that the Pythagoreans closely connected numbers, and especially the numbers three and ten, with their whole view of nature and of the gods. As we have already noted, Aristotle was struck with this view, and, after quoting the Pythagorean dictum concerning three as "the complete or perfect number," he traces this perfection to *nature*, as if there was a fundamental threeness in the very nature of things and hence somehow involved in the divine nature; and to this fact he ascribes certain trinitarian features in the rites of the Greek religion. How much is to be made of this remarkable

passage one cannot say. Aristotle makes no further allusion to the subject: but it certainly contains evidence that somehow the triadal principle as revealed in nature and in what may be called the divine mathematics, had taken deep root in the ideas of men, and makes it easier to understand how the theory of triads should have had so large a place in the history of religions. Of course these Pythagorean and Aristotelian philosophical theories are comparatively late in the history of religion. They belong to what may be called the age of Ethnic scholasticism. The Ethnic trinities had their origin in the spontaneous mythologizing intuitions of man's religious nature long before philosophers had begun to theorize on primitive beliefs. But Greek philosophy always worked on the religious materials which lay imbedded in the earlier traditions, and it cannot be doubted that the earliest man began quickly to use his imagination on the arithmetical elements of the divine order exhibited within and around him. How large a part this may have played in the development of the triads that appear already formed when the light of history dawns it is impossible to say. Philosophy had its rise much later. But the doctrine of numbers in their mystical significance was certainly an attractive one to the Greeks, among whom philosophy originated, as is illustrated in Pythagoreanism, which had a wide influence; and it was out of Greek philosophical traditions that Plotinus drew his trinitarian theory

and its scholastic conclusion that God not only existed in trinity but could exist in no other way, either in duality or in quaternity, thus reaching the position that trinity is of the essence of the divine being and hence an absolute necessity.

Turning now to the history of the Christian trinity, and asking ourselves how much the triple idea had to do with its development, the same obscurity hangs over its origin as was the case with the Ethnic trinities. Philosophy did not begin to enter into the question until the Nicene and post-Nicene age. But when we realize that the earliest Christian theologians were students and admirers of Greek philosophy, and especially revered such thinkers as Pythagoras and Plato and Aristotle, we cannot err in believing that they easily sympathized with their theories of the occult relations of certain numbers such as three or seven or ten to nature and religion and God. Pythagoras seems to have been held in great repute by the Greek Fathers generally. He is quoted or referred to by Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, as if of high authority, and Clement, after quoting a passage from the Pythagoreans, describes their utterance as "written through the inspiration of God." The philosophical trinitarianism of Athanasius was based on the assumption that trinity was as absolutely essential to the mode of existence of the Divine Being as his omnipotence and omniscience and other natural attributes. Such an idea did

not spring from the teachings of Christ or even of Paul. Whence did it arise, if not in the philosophical scholasticism of the Pythagorean-Platonic-Aristotelianism of which Athanasius drank so deeply? It may be suggested that he owed it quite as much to the Fourth Gospel. This is indeed possible, but the writer of that gospel drank quite as deeply of the same spring. This inclination to regard threeness as an essential feature of God is seen in Augustine's use of trinitarian analogies found in nature, and especially in the triple division of the faculties of the soul. As I have already noted, his work on the trinity is largely employed in tracing such analogies, and thus trying to prove that the triple character which seems to pervade God's handiwork must intimate and reveal a corresponding triplicity in himself. It was reserved for a much later age to raise the question already raised by Plotinus, whether God could exist in any other way than by a trinity. But it was a question that was logically bound to arise in the Christian dogma as well as in the Ethnic. Plotinus, in his own pantheistic way, placed the scholastic capstone on the Greek trinitarianism by his assertion against the Gnostics that the Divine Hypostases *could be no more and no less than three*, and the same curious conclusion has been reached by our present-day theologians in their position that God as a self-conscious and social being must exist in a tri-personal form. Of the bad psychology involved in what is called the

"social trinity" I have already spoken. I here refer to it to illustrate how thoroughly the Ethnic tendency to find triality in nature and in deity is continued and finally summed up in the history of the Christian trinity, with the metaphysical and transcendental conclusion that trinity is the absolutely necessary form of the divine existence.

But we must look deeper for the most radical resemblances between the Ethnic trinities and the Christian, and the further we go, the more remarkable the resemblances become. Our previous studies of the Ethnic trinities showed how deeply seated in the earliest religious ideas of the race were those of *generation and mediation*. Both of these ideas underlie the oldest mythologies and theogonies. As the generative principle was the foundation of the human family, it was naturally transferred to man's conceptions of the origin of the gods. The mythological trinities are as a rule composed of male and female divinities, thus laying a basis for triads consisting of husband, wife, and child, or, in other words, of father, mother, and son or daughter. If, as sometimes was the case, the triad was wholly masculine, each member of the triad had his female companion, and one member was, in such a case, usually a son of one of the pairs. But it was the rule rather than the exception that a goddess was a member of the triad, and sometimes even two out of the three were feminine, as for example, in the Homeric trinity, Zeus, Here, and Athene, and also in the Roman

Capitoline triad, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. In the Egyptian triad of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, Isis alone is feminine. But whatever be the proportion of the masculine and feminine elements in the mythological Ethnic trinities, the generative principle is fundamental to them all. There is always a god who represents fatherhood, and one who represents sonship: and if motherhood is not directly represented in the triad itself, it is always in the background, and its presence is implied. It was often in this way that triads became enlarged to four deities or doubled or tripled. Sometimes, for instance, the masculine triad was supplemented by a feminine triad. Thus the Ethnic trinities were really supposed to be families, in which the three essential family constituents were united together, — father, mother, and son. The influence of philosophical abstract thought upon the mythological trinities tended to eliminate the family conception, or at least to break up its symmetry and completeness; yet it is very significant that Plotinus, who gives us the most abstract trinity that was ever conceived, follows Plato in calling his first principle, "The One," by the name of Father, and makes generation the power of emanation through which his metaphysical trinity is evolved. If his τὸ ἓν, ὁ νοῦς, ἡ ψυχή are too profoundly impersonal and pantheistic to form in any true sense a household, they at least are brought into metaphysical relationship by the generative law on which the household rests.

How, now, does the Christian trinity stand related to the generative family conception? We need not go far for the answer. Fatherhood and sonship are its vital elements. The whole economy of salvation in the Christian religion, as it was developed in the course of the first three centuries, was summed up in the offices of God, the Father of mankind, and of his Divine Son, who came into the world to carry out his Father's plan of grace. Not only so, but, further, the generative principle which fatherhood and sonship involve, if these names are truly significant, and not merely symbolic, is made the metaphysical corner-stone of the fully developed Nicene trinitarianism. In fact, the controversies of the Nicene age revolved around the question whether the Son was *eternally generated* from the Father or was *merely a creature* like other created beings. This was the precise issue between Arius and Athanasius. The triumph of the Athanasian homoousian doctrine was indeed a conservative victory in more senses than one; for it signalized the retention in Christian trinitarian theology of that Ethnic idea which had its origin in prehistoric ages, and seems to have been the germ of all the Ethnic trinities of which the history of religions gives account. It is no wonder that in our day there should have been a strong reaction against a form of trinitarianism that bears so plainly the marks of its mythological parentage. The sharp, terse wit of Emmons, which made his dictum,

"Eternal generation is eternal nonsense," so famous, had its edge and point in the query whether there could be any generation without a beginning. But how about the added query whether generation itself, as applied to God, is not a crude materialism. Emmons might well have given a double edge to his wit. "Eternal generation" is no more nonsensical as a theological speculation concerning God than temporal generation; and the retention of the generation idea, whether with or without the adjective "eternal," in theological language, only shows how fundamental it is to all trinitarian forms of thought.

But, looking at the interior relations of the Christian trinity, two features of it seem at first sight to differentiate it quite completely from the Ethnic trinities, namely, the *absence of the feminine element*, and the doctrine of the *procession of the Holy Spirit*. These peculiar features are the result of the peculiar historical origin of the Christian dogma. Jesus of Nazareth, around whom the Christian trinity grew, was himself a man of Jewish stock and parentage. He had a human mother as well as father. In fact, while legend played around the story of his birth and at length invested him with a divine paternity, no question was ever raised as to Mary's true motherhood; so that when Christ began to be looked at as of divine nature, the true Son of God, it was impossible to complete the trinity with Mary, as would naturally have been the case. The legend

of the miraculous conception of Mary, which soon attached itself to that of Jesus, paved the way for the later θεοτόκος dogma, namely, that she was the true mother of God; and this in turn laid the basis of her own divineness which culminated in the Mariolatry of the Middle Ages. But the dogma of Mary was of comparatively slow growth. Meanwhile the vacant place in the trinity was left unfilled. These historical facts help explain the slowness and fluctuating character of the evolution of the third person. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit as a separate person, and as the third member of the trinity, was really a sort of makeshift or accident. From our historical standpoint of the comparative study of religions, it becomes more easily explicable why the Holy Spirit of God became separated from God himself, and was added to the Father and the Son to form a trinity. It was a sort of historical necessity that the vacant place should be filled, and thus a duad became a triad. The Ethnic trinities were so many signal lights to remind Christian theologians that their own trinity was yet incomplete. I would not suggest that Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Origen were directly conscious of such a trinitarian influence from Ethnic tradition, but the very air around them was full of trinitarian voices. However this may have been, a curious light is shed on the substitution of the Holy Spirit for the natural third person, namely, the divine mother of Jesus, in an extract which has been preserved, from the Gospel

of the Hebrews, — an early gospel which afterwards came to be regarded as heretical, and thus passed out of use and is largely lost. In this gospel, in the account of the baptism, the Holy Ghost is represented as saying to Christ: "Thou art my first-born son," and further on, in the account of the temptation, Christ himself is made to say: "My mother, the Holy Spirit, lately took me by one of my hairs and carried me to the great mountain Tabor." Here appears the feminine element, so fundamental in all the Ethnic trinities, striving to assert itself on Christian soil. It was the Ebionitic and heretical character of this Gospel of the Hebrews that may have prevented the Holy Spirit from appearing in the Trinity as the divine mother of Christ. There was indeed one difficulty which could not easily be surmounted, namely, the substitution of the Holy Spirit for Mary, the historical mother of Jesus, who was growing more and more sacred in Christian tradition. Then there was a still further difficulty. In the early legendary account of Christ's birth, which was accepted as historical fact, the Holy Spirit was made the masculine agent in Christ's conception (Matt. i. 18, 20; Luke i. 35). The Gospel of the Hebrews must have followed a different legendary tradition. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that the feminine element failed of being represented in the Christian trinity. But the later history of the cultus and dogma of Mary, the so-called "Virgin-mother," gives added evi-

dence that the loss of the feminine element has always been felt in the Christian consciousness. The popularity of the cultus of Mary, and the rapid growth of the dogma of her bodily assumption and enthronement in heaven at Christ's right hand — where she becomes the chief intercessor for man, thus taking the place of Christ, her Son, who has now largely taken the place of the Father as Lord and Judge — vividly indicate how strongly the feminine element, as representative of grace and mercy in God, has always appealed to the human heart. There is no more realistic and pathetic chapter in Christian history than that which records the gradual divinization of Mary the mother of Jesus. In the second century she was the "Virgin-mother." In the fourth and fifth centuries she became the θεοτκόος, or mother of God. Already she has been transformed into a semi-divine being. Then legend followed legend to prepare her for her new sphere and office in the heavenly world. Her miraculous birth had already taken its place in the post-apostolic apocryphal traditions. Her miraculous bodily assumption from the grave to heaven was only a logical afterpiece. Then followed her coronation by the Father or the Son and her installation as "Queen of heaven." The Christian art of the Middle Ages, employed to decorate the great churches and stimulate the faith of the people that thronged them on festival days, is full of paintings illustrative of this wonderful historical evolution. Only one step fur-

ther remained. That was, to invest her with the trinitarian title which her functions already involved.

It is noticeable in all this process of the deification of Mary, that the dogma of the Holy Spirit is losing recognition. It remains, indeed, in the creeds, but it has gone out of the practical faith of men, — as is witnessed by the innumerable pictures in the churches, which represented the popular beliefs and especially the religious conceptions and rites that fed their spiritual life. The Holy Spirit is not wholly absent from these paintings, but everywhere the cultus of Mary, "Our Holy Mother," and "Queen of heaven," is made the centre of attraction and worship, rivaling and more and more uniting itself with that of Christ, her Son. Nothing is more irresistible than the logic of a historical evolution. A religious intuition of the heart is surely destined sooner or later to become a dogma of intellectual belief. A cultus at last becomes a creed. It is understood on Catholic authority that "a congress was called in the city of Rome, some time since, for the purpose of placing the worship of the 'Holy Mother' in a more distinct and authoritative position among the articles of belief and practice." What the result of this movement was has not transpired. But it was not the first effort in this direction. More than thirty years ago Albert Reville, the present rector of the University of Paris, declared, in a small but notable book, "Histoire du dogme de la Divinité de

Jésus Christ:" "More than one serious attempt has already been made in the Ultramontane camp to join in some way Mary to the Trinity, and, if Mariolatry continues longer, it will come to pass." In the light of such facts, a remark of Renan, in one of his essays, having in mind the tendencies of modern Catholic Christianity, has a new significance: "Mary has entered of full right into the Trinity; she far excels the Holy Spirit. She completes the divine family, for it would have been a marvelous thing had the womanly element in Christianity failed to succeed in mounting to the very bosom of God." Such pictures as "The Incoronata," where Mary, placed between the Father and the Son, receives the crown from the former and the homage of the latter, or where Christ, seated at Mary's side, puts the crown on her head, or as "The Last Judgment," in which Christ and Mary sit side by side in separate glories, as if sharing together the offices of judgment and mercy, — such pictures may seem to us Protestants superstitious and even blasphemous, but it must not be forgotten that they testify truly to the religious faith of the whole Christian church down to the sixteenth century, and they declare more vividly than words can how deeply fixed in the human soul is the sentiment of its need of the divine mercy, and how intimately related is the Christian trinity in its radical affirmations to its Ethnic elders. Nor let us Protestants be too critically inclined towards what may seem to us superstitious

features of Catholic faith. Are our skirts quite clear of similar superstitions? Is not the cult of Mary herself growing among us? Is she not the Virgin-mother somehow set apart from all other womankind? Not long ago I heard a Protestant minister of New England ancestry and faith, and who abides in regular standing in the Congregational brotherhood, refer, in no ironical fashion, but with the utmost seriousness, to "the *divine madonna*." Let who will cast a stone at this distinguished Congregational preacher. For myself, I am not a Catholic, nor am I catholically inclined, but my historical studies have only deepened my feeling of charity and even sympathy for every sincere religious belief, though it may have its source in unhistorical and superstitious traditions; for I have learned how tenacious is the grasp of a sincere though ignorant faith on the objects of its trust, and how affiliated are all such objects, when search is made for their historical roots, in the common religious nature of man.

The absence, then, originally, of the feminine element in the Christian dogma of the trinity does not indicate any radical difference in its internal character, when compared with that of the Ethnic trinities. Fortuitous historical circumstances prevented its admission for a while, but the generative principle, which was as fundamental to the Christian dogma as to the Ethnic, really required it, and the development of the cultus of Mary was the natural result. In the Catholic church, which

historically represents the Nicene and post-Nicene Christianity, the dogma and rites of Mary have become a vital part of its system. The Protestant revolt was directed rather against rites than dogmas. Hence it was that Mary was thrown down from her lofty pedestal. But the old dogmas and creeds logically include the doctrine and cultus of Mary which grew spontaneously in the Middle Ages. If those creeds are true, and Mary was the real mother of the God-man, then the special honor and cultus of Mary is defensible. Hence it is that conservative Protestantism to-day, in its reactionary tendencies, is taking more and more kindly to a sort of half-and-half Mariology. Surely, if Jesus is indeed God himself, and Mary was his virgin-mother, why should she not be honored as such, and be even entitled to a seat at her divine Son's right hand in glory? The logic of history rarely fails. There is in it a divine method and providence. It is my profound conviction that the prediction of Reville concerning the tendencies in the Catholic church towards the inclusion of Mary in the Christian trinity will ultimately be verified, and my conclusion, as a historical observer, is equally clear that those Protestants who are devoted to the old Catholic dogmas must finally reach — though the steps taken towards it may be uncertain and slow — the same goal.

Turning now to the other point raised, namely, the Christian dogma of the procession of the Holy Spirit, it is to be noted that it does not appear in

the creeds until the fourth century. The Nicene Creed of 325 simply alludes to the Holy Spirit, without constructing any dogma about it. This shows that no theological discussion had yet arisen on this point. Whether the Holy Spirit was a person or only an influence was not quite clear. As late as the latter part of the fourth century Gregory Nazianzen regarded the question as unsettled and not essential to orthodoxy. What, then, was the common view of the Holy Spirit's relation to God? Plainly it was one of derivation or emanation, analogous to that of the second person, or Son. But why was it that the theory of generation is not applied also to the Holy Spirit as well as to the Son? The answer seems clear. Its clue is given in the Fourth Gospel. Here is found for the first time the theory of the Paraclete (Comforter), and of his procession from the Father. The proem of that gospel had set forth, after the manner of Philo, the theory of the Logos of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, and had identified this preëxistent Logos with Jesus of Nazareth. Generation and procession are simply two forms of derivation from God. No doubt the phrase in John xv. was rhetorical rather than theological; but though it slumbered for nearly two centuries, it was at last caught up when controversy began to arise as to the precise relation of the Holy Spirit to God. It is remarkable that when the doctrine of the third person is first set forth theologically, in the creeds of the middle of

the fourth century, express allusion is made to the language of John xv. and to the term "Paraclete" (Comforter). Athanasius, who became the greatest defender of the homoousian character not only of the second person but also of the third, rested his defense primarily on the Fourth Gospel. There can be no historical doubt, therefore, that the Fourth Gospel is responsible for that peculiar theory of the third person which became incorporated in the so-called Constantinopolitan amendment of the Nicene Creed, and has ever since been retained as a fixed shibboleth of orthodoxy. I will not here stop to consider the light shed by this bit of history on the question of the authorship and date of the Fourth Gospel. What is plain, at all events, is that the author of that gospel derived his trinitarian ideas concerning the eternal generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit from Alexandrian Philonic sources, and that their acceptance by Christian theologians in the third and fourth centuries was due to the fact that the authorship of the Fourth Gospel was attributed to John, the Galilean apostle. The question here arises whether the language placed on the lips of Christ concerning the Paraclete and his procession from the Father was ever really spoken by him. Certainly it is remarkable that no such language can be found in the Synoptic gospels. The very word "Paraclete," or Comforter, is clearly of Greek origin, and is traceable to the same Philo who gave the Greek term "Logos" to Christian theology. In

fact, the two words belong to the vocabulary of a common Greek philosophy. Christ taught no such Logos or Paraclete doctrine, unless we accept the apostolicity of the Fourth Gospel. There are still those who are ready to defend such apostolicity and to hold that Christ spoke the very words of the long discourses and prayer in chapters xiv.–xvii. But the weight of critical authority more and more settles itself on a substantial agreement with the conclusions of Professor B. W. Bacon, in his recently published volume: "An Introduction to the New Testament." Professor Bacon holds that the Fourth Gospel is a post-apostolic writing by an unknown author who gathered the materials from composite sources, employing "trustworthy data and genuine *logia*," but "expanding them into dialectic discourses," "in a manner wholly incompatible with the clear historical recollection of an eyewitness." Professor Bacon further adds: "With all due allowance it is impossible to regard the set discourses of John, as a whole, as other than literary compositions by the author (unknown) of the Johannine Epistles." I am in substantial accord with these conclusions; though I must add that I regard them as quite conservative, and it is my decided feeling that historical criticism in its progress will grow more and more hesitant about allowing even so much. I think Professor Bacon has yielded quite as much to the genuineness of original *logia* in the set discourses as the evidence warrants. He well says:

"Few will deny that in this gospel the prerogative of the ancient historian to place in the mouth of his characters discourses reflecting his own idea of what were suitable to the occasion has been used to the limit."[1] The bearing of this critical conclusion on the point before us is clear. If the language of John xv. 25 cannot be regarded as that of Christ himself, but only an interpretation of what a writer of the second century supposed to be the spirit of his teaching, and in accord with the literary habit of his day put into his mouth, it is impossible to quote them as a truly gospel foundation for the article of the creed on the third person. Here, also, it is important to remember that the Fourth Gospel makes no figure in early history till after the middle of the second century, and that the doctrine of the Paraclete does not appear till near the end of that century, — a strange thing certainly, if the Fourth Gospel was apostolic and in the hands of the apostolic Christians. What the form of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed, as regards the third person, would have been, had the Fourth Gospel not been written, cannot of course be determined. Without it, certainly, there would have been no doctrine of the Paraclete as a distinct person. Philo, indeed, used the term, but applied it to the Logos, as he did the term mediator. To the last discourses of the Fourth Gospel must

[1] For my own historical judgment on the general question, see Appendix A, on "The Johannine Problem," in *A Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism.*

we look, and to them alone, for the historical origin of the dogma of the procession of the Holy Spirit.

We are now in a position to be able to determine quite clearly what the real meaning of "procession" was, when adopted into the creed. Philo and the author of the Fourth Gospel were Alexandrian Platonists, but representing the tendency which was now growing towards the New Platonic monism. The key word, as we have seen, of that philosophy was evolution, or derivation. All things proceeded, in one way or other, from the one God, whether by generation or some other form of evolution. "The Paraclete who proceedeth from the Father" is genuine Greek Platonic language, and can bear but one interpretation. Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa, who had more influence than any others in the final formation of the completed creed, were thoroughly versed in the Platonic philosophy. The difference to them between the mode of derivation of the second person and the third was simply one of form, not of substance. Generation and procession were essentially the same, and the persons thus derived, though seemingly in different ways, were equally *homoousioi*, and in the same sense divine. Thus the apparent difference between the Ethnic trinities and the Christian trinity in the matter of the form of derivation of the third person fades into a purely superficial distinction; and, in this case, as in the case of the absence of

the feminine element, circumstances entirely fortuitous seem to have prevented the Christian trinitarianism from being based on the generation family principle throughout.

But it is the *mediation* element, after all, that binds the Ethnic trinities and the Christian trinity in closest and most intimate relationship. This fact is so patent that I need not dwell upon it at any length. The whole Christian trinity and all the doctrines that hang upon it, have as their very centre and crown the divine mediatorship of Christ, the Son of God, who was sent by his Father on the mission of healing the alienation wrought by sin, and reuniting God and his human creatures in one moral kingdom. The whole scheme of salvation circles around the word μεσίτης, introduced into the Christian theology by Paul, and the kindred word λόγος, derived from Philo and Greek philosophy. Add the word παράκλητος (Paraclete), and in these three Greek words, all directly Philonic, and more indirectly Platonic, we have the keynote not only to Christian trinitarianism, but also to Christian theology in its whole range. I scarcely need add that mediatorship is equally the keynote of the Ethnic trinities. In fact, it was plainly the strongest bond of the Ethnic trinitarianism, working more efficiently than all others to preserve its substance and form, exposed as it was constantly to the disintegrating effects of polytheism on the one hand and pantheism on the other. The great question of religion and religious

faith has always been from the beginning of time, how man shall be able to enter into such relations of amity and communion with God as shall insure his help and favor. To establish such a basis of religious trust has been the end of every religion that history gives any account of. And, as we have seen, more and more prominent in the histories of the Ethnic religions has grown the mediative principle. The terms "Father" and "Son," "Mediator," "Messenger," "Friend of Man," "Savior," are by no means peculiar to Christianity. They are found scattered over the sacred books of the East, and later in the West, in Greek mythologies and philosophies, until at last, in the complete New Platonism of Plotinus and Proclus, they reach their height of moral and religious significance, and remind us that we have entered somehow into a truly Christian atmosphere and faith. When we read of Sosiosh, the "benevolent" one and "savior," and of Mithra, the "mediator," in Zoroastrianism, of Krishna, the incarnate god-man, in Hindooism, of Æsculapius, the "σωτήρ" or "savior" in Greek religious rites, we are indeed made to feel that we are "not far from the kingdom of God." The more closely the Ethnic religions are studied, the more deeply one realizes that the very foundations of the Ethnic trinities were laid in the need felt by the human heart of some favorable and friendly medium between weak man and those heavenly powers that rule earth and sea and sky and the nether world

below. Whichever member of a trinity, whether Father or Son or Mother, becomes in human apprehension the mediating friend of man, at once he or she is made the most prominent and popular object of worship and sacrificial rites. The very development of some of the Ethnic trinities seems to have come about along this mediating line. The need of a go-between to mediate with the highest and most distant deity led to the evolution of a second person who as a son of that highest deity could be the bearer to him of human prayers and sacrifices and offerings. It was the need still felt of another go-between to fill the chasm not wholly closed between the Son and man, that sometimes led to another addition, thus making a trinity complete. The function of "intercessor" was strongly marked in some of the Oriental cults. The investigation of the analogies furnished by several of these religions has been a fascinating subject of late with Oriental scholars. A competent foreign critic, reviewing one of these attempts to find historical analogies between one of the Babylonian triads with its "intercessor," and one of the Zoroastrian trinities with its "mediator," while refusing to accept the evidence as full proof of any actual borrowing, concludes: "Man, terrified at finding himself before the power of the divine majesty, places intermediaries between his God and himself, who, being divinized in their turn, demand still other intermediaries" ("Revue de l'histoire des reli-

gions," 1898, i. 240). A prolonged study of the Christian and Ethnic religions has convinced me that this critic's words bring us to the fountain head, not only of all the trinities that have ever been evolved, but also of all the various religions that have been developed around them. Other causes contributed their share of influence, but more influential than all has been this most radical of human religious instincts, with its inextinguishable fears and hopes.

CHAPTER III

INTERNAL RELATIONS — DIFFERENCES

In our consideration of the internal resemblances that are visible in a comparison of the Ethnic and Christian trinities, we had occasion to note several differences that seemed at first sight to be of a radical character, but on closer examination resolved themselves into superficial features that only served to make the resemblances more striking. Such were the absence of the feminine element, and the derivation by procession rather than generation of the Holy Spirit. We have now to notice other differences which do not so easily yield to critical examination. Attention has already been called to the historical origin of the Christian trinity as an outgrowth of faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. The raising of Christ from the position of a man to that of a divine being is the historical starting-point of the Christian trinity. Here is a point of radical difference between the Christian trinity and all the Ethnic trinities. No Ethnic trinity centres in or starts from a man. If Zoroaster was a historical personage, he never became a member of a trinity, though in later legend he was invested

with semi-divine functions. Gautama was also raised in later Buddhistic tradition to the place of a god, as an incarnation of Buddha; but no trinity of divine persons grew up around him. Mohammedanism is a Semitic religion closely akin to Judaism, but though Mohammed proclaimed himself a reformer and prophet like Moses and Christ, he never was raised by his followers to a divine rank. All the mythological trinities had their origin in the religious imagination of the early man. So the philosophical trinities, such as the Hindoo and the New Platonic, were the offspring of the speculative reason. Plotinus became indeed a sort of divine man in the eyes of his admiring disciples, but he was himself the sole author of the Plotinian trinity, and it never occurred to the most speculative of his followers to introduce the name of their master into a trinity of such transcendental abstractions as "The One, the Intelligence, and the Soul." It is true that the early Christian Fathers grazed on Ethnic soil in laying the philosophic foundations of the Christian trinitarian dogma, but it remains no less true that without Jesus Christ there would have been no Christian trinity, and that he has remained its true theological centre throughout all its history. It has even been made the great apologetical argument for the truth of the Christian trinity that it had a true historical origin, while all Ethnic trinities are claimed to be unhistorical creations of fancy or philosophy. I have already shown how

wanting in historical verity this position is. The evolution of the Ethnic trinities is as much a matter of history as is that of the Christian dogma. There is, indeed, one element of truth in the Christian apology. Jesus Christ was a historical person, and he not only became the historical founder of a new religion, but he also was raised after his death, in the faith of his disciples, to a divine rank, and to membership in a trinity of divine beings. But these historical facts concerning the evolution of a trinity out of the Jewish monotheism do not make the Christian trinity itself, as a religious dogma, a historical eternal truth, any more than the corresponding facts concerning the evolution of the Ethnic trinities prove them to be valid statements concerning the nature of God. A fatal fallacy is involved in this apologetical argument. It assumes as historical fact what should first be proved, namely, that Jesus of Nazareth was really born of a virgin by an immediate act of divine power, making unnecessary the coöperation of Christ's putative father, and further, that this miraculous birth contained within itself a real divine incarnation of God. But such proof has never been furnished, and in the nature of things cannot be. Were it capable of being given, it would involve the utter and fatal subversion of God's own universal and eternal laws, and of those ultimate principles on which human science and history rest. But, fortunately, no such conflict between science and faith can arise.

The only direct human witness would be Mary the mother of Jesus herself, and she never appeared in evidence. Further, historical criticism has made clear the legendary character of the traditions that slowly gathered around the birth and infancy of Jesus. While, then, it is true that Christ as a man is the historical starting-point of the Christian trinity, it is not true that the dogma itself any more rests upon historical grounds, as an article of religious faith, than the Ethnic trinities. All trinitarian doctrines are divisible into two classes, the mythological and the philosophical. The Christian trinity belongs to the latter class. Such a doctrine of God cannot be confounded with any historical human being, such as Jesus of Nazareth. Christ himself was a monotheist, not a trinitarian. Paul, Justin Martyr, and Origen, who may be styled the three chief originators of Christian trinitarianism, drew their theological ideas from Greek philosophy. The real difference, therefore, between the Ethnic trinities and the Christian on this point dwindles to the single fact that the Christian religion slowly developed out of its original monotheism a trinitarian dogma borrowed from Greek philosophy, and installed its founder in it as "very God of very God;" what no Ethnic religion ever did.

Another difference that arrests attention in this comparative study is that the Christian trinity, after reaching its full development, remains substantially fixed in its trinitarian form, adhering to

the three persons of whom it was originally composed, and also to the methods of derivation by which these were related to each other; while the Ethnic trinities exhibit a much more facile and fluxive character, — easily exchanging one trinity for another, doubling or tripling them, or still further pluralizing them, as in the case of the Egyptian. Yet it is not to be forgotten that the Christian dogma passed through a considerable period of flux and change, until it became stereotyped at length by the formation of creeds, which were henceforth made authoritative and unchangeable as canons of orthodoxy. The Ethnic trinities, on the other hand, had a freer development, and were never fixed in creeds. The dogmatic spirit which so characterized the Nicene age is thus largely responsible for the arrest of freedom and fluidity in Christian trinitarian speculation. To become heretical on the single question of the form of the trinity as set forth in the Nicene Creed exposed any theological leader to excommunication and even exile and death. This external cause, rather than anything radical in the nature of the Christian trinity, explains the apparent inflexibility of the Christian dogma as compared with the Ethnic trinities. It is one of the most significant facts of history, — showing how deep-seated and influential is the religious sentiment in man's nature, — that no human passion is so quickly aroused to the point of bitter and relentless persecution as the passion of reli-

gion when it becomes wedded to some particular form of dogmatic belief. The annals of the Ethnic religions cannot be said to be wholly free from these perversions of the religious nature. But this can be said, that when Ethnic history is compared with the Christian on this point, the balance is overwhelmingly in favor of the Ethnic religions. Let it be remembered here that Mohammedanism does not count among them. It is half-brother to Christianity, having a common descent from Judaism. Indeed, the more one studies Ethnic history, the more one is surprised and impressed by the intellectual and religious liberty that was universally enjoyed, except on rare occasions of special excitement. I have already adverted to the remarkable spirit of toleration shown in the Buddhist faith throughout its long history, reminding one of the teachings of Christ and his gospel. Alas! that Christianity afterwards should so far have deteriorated from that gospel of the founder, and should have made so poor a show when compared with its great Eastern rival. It is still further to be noted that the Ethnic trinities, as well as the Christian, gradually became crystallized into fixed trinitarian forms, which have remained with little change for ages. This was especially true of the philosophical Ethnic trinities, with which the Christian trinity may more properly be compared. The Hindoo and Plotinian trinities in their full pantheistic form became as fixed as the Christian trinity, and

even more so, for the Western nations that were converted to Christianity have been much more progressive than the Orientals, and the great movements that have agitated Latin Christendom have given to Christian theology a fluxive character that has made the law of evolution active in all its history, even down to the present day.

There is still another point of comparison where a noticeable difference is discernible between the Ethnic and Christian trinitarianism. The Ethnic trinities have as a rule been connected with polytheistic or pantheistic religious ideas, or a mixture of both. The Vedic trinities had a polytheistic background. The later Hindoo *trimurti* was compounded of a strange mixture of pantheism and polytheism. The Christian trinity, on the other hand, starting from monotheism, was considerably free from such tendencies in either direction. There is no doubt that the original Jewish monotheistic element was the means of preserving Christianity for some centuries from the polytheistic and pantheistic influences that were in the air around it. But the Christian doctrine of angels and devils, which came directly from Judaism, contained a polytheistic leaven that in the course of time leavened the whole lump. These beings, good and evil, were of superhuman or semidivine nature, and were the usual messengers from the upper world to the earth, sent on errands of mercy or judgment. There is no doubt that the Jews of the Captivity received their ideas con-

cerning spirits dwelling in the upper air from their Zoroastrian Persian masters. Such in general, indeed, were the lower gods of the Ethnic polytheism. The Greek pantheon of Olympus was filled with such beings, — gods and goddesses, — who were all obedient to Zeus, the "Father of gods and men." The Greek doctrine of demons, or gods of a still lower and lesser sort, was of later origin, but had already come into New Platonic speculation in the time of Plutarch. Plato, in the Timæus, made one God the creator and father of this world, employing as his instruments lower gods, whom he first created and then bade fulfill his decrees concerning the further creation of the world and men. This view comes very near to the Christian doctrine of angels. It can be seen, then, that there was not so great a difference, after all, between Ethnic and Christian ideas as to the divine or semi-divine beings who inhabited the celestial regions. It was mostly a matter of names. The Ethnic polytheism that lay behind the Ethnic trinities was not essentially different from the Jewish and Christian doctrine of angels and devils who were all under God's rule and willingly or unwillingly did his bidding. We know how prominent became this feature of Christian theology in the fourth and fifth centuries, when bad as well as good spirits from the upper world were believed to range freely over the earth and enter into close relations with human kind, with power to injure or to bless. In

fact, the monotheism of Christ and early Christianity had already largely given place to a thoroughly polytheistic conception of the relations of the upper world to this world. Satan practically divided this lower sphere with God; and the messengers and servants of both beings were busy in the discharge of their various functions. Wherein such views differed from the so-called polytheism of the Ethnic religions it is not easy to say. Here, also, is the explanation of the rapid growth of saint and image worship, as well as that of the Virgin Mary. The line between the divine, superhuman, and human became so dim and indistinct that it was easily crossed, and men and women, if reputed to be peculiarly holy, came to be treated as if transfigured into superhuman or even divine beings. The truth is that during the Middle Ages the Christian church was practically polytheistic, — a fact that was fitly illustrated when a bishop of Rome in the seventh century dedicated to "Mary and all the saints" the Pantheon, a pagan temple, which, as its name shows, had been dedicated to all the gods of polytheism.

I am sure that my readers are by this time prepared to hear me confess the surprise which I have experienced in the progress of these comparative studies. It was my full expectation at the outset to find differences between the Ethnic trinities and the Christian trinity quite as radical as the resemblances; but this survey has revealed the fact that the resemblances are fundamental,

while the differences are superficial, and on closer scrutiny are seen to rest on external and fortuitous rather than internal grounds. The historical conclusion to which one is forced to come is certainly plain, namely, that all the varied forms of monotheistic, trinitarian, polytheistic, or pantheistic religion in the world have one common root in man's religious nature, and that all the differences which have been developed in the movements of history apparently so radical and complete are traceable to differences of environment, modifications of human feeling and thought brought about by natural peculiarities of race, isolation of tribes and even families from each other in early barbarous times, and more especially by the different degrees of civilization and culture to which the various peoples of the world have attained. As Christians we do the highest honor to Jesus of Nazareth when we let history, which is one of God's methods of providential revelation, tell the whole truth about him. It was in a degree pardonable to men, "in the times of ignorance," to hold a blind faith and even to fall into gross superstitions. Like age, like people, like religion. What could be expected in the almost total eclipse of intellectual life in the so-called Dark Ages (*seculum obscurum*) of mediæval Christendom but a religion of credulity and fear and cruelty, — a religion which I venture to characterize as forming the most terrible religious chapter in all history, and only to be compared with the

Shamanism of savage tribes. The excuse for the execrable deeds of that unhappy time was the profound ignorance of the people. But we live in a different world. Slowly but surely the day has dawned, and the shadows of error and delusion have disappeared. Science and history have opened the once closed book of God's ways in nature, in providence, and in human life. Man has found his rightful place in God's universe. Truth revealed gradually and "in divers ways," according to human capacity to receive it, is beginning to show its real eternal nature behind all the more or less obscure and distorted forms of religious faith; and as God's law of evolution develops man's intellectual and moral powers more and more fully, so his eternal truth will correspondingly brighten until it shall become the Sun of the whole moral world and its "true light" forever.

Surely the excuse of the "times of ignorance" cannot be ours. With increased light and knowledge comes increased responsibility. The long historical past over which our survey has extended brings in its train a solemn message. It is for Christians of to-day to read it aright.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROVIDENTIAL MISSION OF CHRISTIANITY AS A WORLD-RELIGION

The comparative survey now concluded of the chief religions and faiths of the world, especially as to the nature of the Divine Being and his relations with mankind, has brought us to a point of view where a wide and comprehensive outlook is possible of the present providential mission of Christianity as a coming world-religion. It may be asked at the outset whether such unity of religious beliefs and sentiments and principles of conduct is possible or even desirable. But why not? All things in this age of ours are tending towards unity in all directions as never before. The central forces of society are moving from isolation and provincialism towards cosmopolitan forms of life. The cosmos of science under the law of natural evolution finds itself repeated in a cosmos of moral order and unity. The unity of nature and material law involves the essential unity of man and of the moral kingdom. Christ built his gospel on this very truth, and its ideal was that "all may be one." As the real principle of the gospel is becoming understood and prac-

ticed, the unification of society in all its various forms goes on apace. It is beginning to move even in politics as well as in commerce and in different departments of international relationship. Already the dream of a far-off millennium when the nations shall learn war no more seems realizable, as one notes how widely the principle of unity of race and of a common human brotherhood is triumphing over the barbarous ideas of racial separation and antagonism and hatred. Why now in all this movement should not religion take the lead? All men are essentially one in religious nature and in moral instincts, hopes, fears, and aspirations. The foundations of the religious life are laid deep in the common religious instincts and yearnings of humanity. Science, history, and philosophy unite in affirming the unity of the Supreme Power that moves and guides the universe. If the moral consciousness distinguishes a moral kingdom with its own moral laws from the natural cosmos with its physical laws, it also seeks behind both realms of being a single first cause, —

> "One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves;"

and if this be true, why should not a common religious faith and bond, making all human souls "of one heart and of one mind," become an accomplished fact, and not be allowed to remain a millennial ideal? Such a consummation is not a

mere vision of the religious fancy, but a clear affirmation of the Christian consciousness that grows more pronounced and emphatic under these last revelations of God's providence, which is declaring more plainly than ever before the "good news" of a coming world-wide era of justice and peace and unity.

I am not here thinking of traditional conceptions of external unity which have had rule so long, but which historical criticism has swept away with so much other rubbish. External church organizations indeed have their uses; but when outward unity is made a fundamental principle of the Kingdom, it becomes subversive of the very unity it seeks to reach and preserve. Every form of externality is limiting and divisive in its very nature. The radical trouble with Christendom to-day, and equally with all the religions and religious organizations of the world, is that each church or established religious cult claims to be the true kingdom of God on earth, with the implication that all other churches so called lack, more or less completely, the notes or marks of that kingdom. The same is true of all credal tests. They are barriers to unity. History shows only too clearly that they have always been the great promoters of strife and discord. As we look back over the long history of trinitarian ideas, as summed up in the Ethnic and Christian trinities, what is the impressive lesson taught, if not this, that no true religious unity can ever come out of

religious dogmas and the assertion of them as essentials of religious harmony? What is the ground of hope to the historical observer to-day, as he surveys the religious field, if not just this, that our new age with its new scientific and historical light is breaking down the barriers which the long reign of dogmatic faith has reared and strengthened into fortresses of defensive warfare, and is thus opening the way for the spread everywhere of true spiritual freedom and charity and love and peace and unity? Yes, history, maligned as it has been, is already proving itself to be, as its principles and methods are allowed to work more consistently and thoroughly, the providential herald of God's one kingdom of liberty and love to our whole human race.

But, if such a religious unity is possible and to be sought, the question at once arises, which one of the great historical religions that have hitherto shared with each other the moral dominion of the world is best fitted for this unifying task. Nor is the question as easy to answer as at first sight appears. Christianity is one of the younger religions of the earth. In numbers it is surpassed by other religions. It is not the only religion that has the missionary proselyting spirit so essential to any religious propaganda. Over against it there rise still, as during all the centuries since Christ first proclaimed his new gospel, religions that are hoary with the hallowed traditions of age, and have become intrenched in the faith and

affections of millions of devotees, with a long succession of prophets and sages, and sacred writings that are as venerable and dear to them as our Old and New Testaments are to us. And it is important here to note that all the efforts of Christendom for these nineteen centuries, by sword or by gospel, to overthrow these intrenchments, have been utterly vain. I do not forget some special Christian missionary movements which for the time seemed full of hope; but the new seed never sank into the soil of pagan life, — whether because the ground was not good or the seed not rightly sown, we will not decide. Still less would I speak depreciatingly of the last missionary crusade that has given our own age so conspicuous a place in Christian annals. No doubt much good has been done. Foundations have been laid. The Scriptures have been translated into many non-Christian languages. This is certainly a good and great work. But have the dense masses of the Hindoos, the Chinese, the Buddhists, the Mohammedans, been at all thoroughly reached and moved? Have the religious systems whose devotees far outnumber Christian believers yet been assailed in their centres of influence and overthrown? Certainly not. Is it not time, then, to ask how such ramparts of dogmatic and traditional defense can be broken down? History, in its marvelous evolution, and history alone, gives the answer. How clearly is divine providence working to-day to solve the problem that has seemed so difficult! Never before

could it be said, as it can be to-day, that Christianity has the promise of the future. The great political powers of the world are Christian. The world's commerce, science, culture, literature, are in Christian hands. What, then, we are ready to ask, is the vital principle in the Christian religion that has given it this position of intellectual and moral power and armed it for the work of the world's evangelization? History again is our guide. It tells us in language not to be mistaken, that, not by ecclesiasticism or creeds or dogmatic barriers and defenses, has Christianity grown to its present stature, but by that leaven of Christ's original gospel which has continued to work in saintly lives, even in darkest periods of superstition, until, like an underground river, in these post-Reformation times it has regained the surface of Christian society and is renewing its life and strength in the fresh divine revelations of our age.

What the essential quality of that gospel leaven is we have already seen. Christ's kingdom was of the spirit. Its ruling force was love. "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another*" (John xiii. 35). How hollow and sad does past Christian history appear when the real meaning of these words forces itself on our minds! What a false religion had Christianity become when, under the banner of Christ's cross, it came to be a source of division and strife and bitterness! And all because it had missed the true meaning of Christ's gospel, and made its

essence to consist in constrained unity of church authority and creed, instead of the freedom of brotherly love. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."[1] These words Christ himself explained when he gave his "new commandment." Here, then, is the true trinity of the Christian gospel: *Love, truth, freedom;* for love leads to truth, and truth leads to freedom. What now follows? This: that such dogmas as those of the trinity or the metaphysical deity of Christ and kindred ones are not of the essence of the gospel; for they are matters of the head, and in their very nature create division, while the gospel of Christ is an experience of the heart and engenders brotherhood and unity and charity. So that when the question is put before us: how shall Christianity go forth to evangelize the world? the answer rings sharp and clear from the lips of history itself: not by any effort to break down and destroy the Ethnic religions and erect the Christian dogmas on their ruins, — a feat which nineteen centuries have proved to be impossible, — but rather to reopen the too long closed fountains of the original gospel proclaimed by Jesus himself

[1] Let me here say once for all that I quote Christ's sayings from the Fourth Gospel only when they are in full harmony with the Synoptic gospels. There can be no doubt that in the passages here used the unknown writer has set forth in language of wonderful power and beauty the central elements of Christ's teaching.

on the hills of Galilee and Judæa, whose essential notes are love and truth and freedom.

But let us not misunderstand the true import of Christ's words. He did not mean that it is of no consequence what dogmas a man may hold, or that mere love and obedience will solve all religious problems for us; but he did mean that *the way of approach* to such problems is not by dogmatic authority, but by each man's own moral consciousness working on all questions of truth through the moral exercises of love and liberty. Obey the new moral law of Christian love, and *that love shall make you free in the truth.* Can anything be simpler or plainer? And yet how Christian tradition has distorted and falsified it, until a man named with the name of Christ could put his pagan or even Christian brother to a cruel death because of a purely dogmatic or speculative difference, and think he was "doing God service." How clear all this becomes in the light of the comparative history of religions! Take, for example, the dogma of the trinity. In some form or other this dogma is one of the most ancient and widespread in the annals of human belief and thought. A close analytical comparison reveals the fact that all the leading trinities, the Christian included, have been developed from certain common religious intuitions and sentiments. As these trinities have grown more metaphysical and speculative, they have become too abstract for the ordinary comprehension of uneducated people. Yet

such dogmas have been taught by the church in its creeds as if they were of the essence of faith and really necessary to salvation. Was such a yoke ever put on human consciences before in this whole world's history? But how can such a yoke be put on the devotees of non-Christian religions? Notice that, if Christianity proposes to convert the world on the basis of its dogmas, dogma must be met with dogma. The question must be as to the *form* of the dogma to be held. How vain such an appeal must be, our missionaries have been learning only too well. On this very question of the trinity, — the special subject of our studies, but also, in fact, the real vital centre of all dogmatic theology, — the educated Hindoo or Mussulman will unflinchingly hold his ground against the Christian missionary who is seeking to convert him, and if he does not convince his opponent that his doctrine of God is purest and best, he will certainly convince himself. This survey has shown that no keener thinkers have ever speculated on trinitarian lines than the master minds of Hindooism or New Platonism. Compare Origen, Athanasius, or Augustine with the unknown builders of the Hindoo *trimurti*, or with Plato and Plotinus, and whither, think you, must the palm go? Is it not enough to note that these Christian theologians freely acknowledged their indebtedness to their Ethnic masters?

But history itself shows us "a more excellent way." Paul had learned enough of Christ's gos-

pel to declare it, in the most inspired chapter of Apostolic literature, the 13th of 1 Corinthians, — that famous panegyric of love, — where he says: "Though I have all knowledge it is nothing without love." Let Christianity, laying aside its exploded traditions and creeds that were the product of ages of Christian decline and darkness, write on its banners Christ's parable of the prodigal son, and Paul's chapter on knowledge *versus* love, with its truly trinitarian close, "But now abideth *faith*, *hope*, *love*, these three, and the *greatest of these is love*," and the triumph of Christianity as the world's religion will be only a question of time.

CHAPTER V

THE UNREADINESS OF CHRISTENDOM FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF ITS MISSION

But I must not forget, in my idealistic ardor, that Christianity is not yet ready to take up its march to final victory. It still clings to its swaddling clothes and listens with unwilling ears to the *Zeitgeist* — the Carlylian "Sartor Resartus" — that would fain reclothe it for its higher destiny. In Paul's language, it still "speaks as a child, feels as a child, thinks as a child," and cannot realize that the time has come when it should "become a man and put away childish things." The passage from childhood to manhood is indeed the most critical and even tragical stage in the moral history of an individual or of an age. It is like the change from the grub to the butterfly, — the taking on of new faculties — a veritable birth into a higher and nobler life. Such a spiritual regeneration cannot but be attended with sharp pangs and overwhelming anxieties. Jesus himself seems to have foreseen what bitter experiences would be the lot of his disciples in the future progress of his kingdom, and forewarned them in words that grow fuller and fuller of prophetic meaning as the

ages go by: "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come, but when she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world" (John xvi. 21). Christianity is passing through such a bitter crisis in its life to-day. It is nothing less than a "παλιγγενεσία." Nothing so radical has ever before happened in all its history. From the day (Oct. 1, 1859) when Charles Darwin so modestly published, in his immortal book "The Origin of Species," the results of his physical researches, and showed that all the processes of nature, including even the development of species, were under a single law of natural evolution, and hence required no special miraculous creative intervention of God, the whole aspect of nature and the universe, of history and its philosophical interpretation, of religion and God, has completely changed. Of course the movement at first was slow and hesitating. But the intimate relation of the new doctrine of evolution to previous scientific discoveries was quickly seen, and the grand unity of unalterable law, with all that it involves in all departments of knowledge, has already become an accepted axiom among all scientific, historical, and philosophical scholars. So radical is the whole change of view that it can only be compared to a new birth where "old things have passed away and all things have become new." We have not only a new astronomy and geology, but also a new science of nature and of life, a new

biology and anthropology; and out of all this new scientific light must come in its order and time a new philosophy and theology, — a new conception of God and his relation to the universe and to man, — a new view of man and of his relations to nature, to his brother man, to history, and to God. It is the fortune or misfortune of our age that it is in the very midst of the agonizing throes that must attend this great new birth of the opening century. Fortunate are they whose eyes are opened seasonably to hail the coming "heir of all the ages." Does the human mother welcome the natal hour when "a man is born into the world"? Why, then, should not this age so honored and blessed of God hail the new scientific and historical evangel?

In the previous chapter I called attention to the providential mission of Christianity as a world-religion; and the serious question remains, how shall Christendom be made ready for the work given it to do? Such a question cannot be answered until the causes of its present unreadiness are thoroughly scrutinized and clearly understood. Let us, then, look over the Christian world and see what the real situation is. First, it is divided into two great camps, the Catholic and the Protestant, which have been in open or concealed warfare from the outbreak of the Protestant Reformation to the present day. No doubt this scientific age is making deep inroads into the prejudices and misunderstandings which have hitherto kept these two great

bodies apart. But the antagonistic principles upon which both rest remain firm and must prevent any real union so long as these principles are adhered to. What a spectacle is presented to non-Christian peoples, when missionaries come to them claiming to represent one common religion of Christ, and who yet treat each other as "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," if not as open enemies. But this is not all. Protestantism itself is split up into sectarian parties and churches, established or non-established, large portions of which do not regard or treat the rest as true Christian organizations. I gladly recognize the rapid strides that are being taken among us toward a more Christian unity and fraternity. It is the most promising sign of the times. But it must not be overlooked that these fraternizing movements as yet extend only over small sections of Protestant Christendom, and are sporadic and inchoate; and the most that can be said of them is that they give evidence, not to be mistaken, of the partial silent penetration of God's new revelations into the minds and hearts of men. Can it even now be said that the spirit of denominational and churchly sectarianism is dying out to any great extent in the great organized Protestant churches? I think not. It must be remembered that Congregationalism is but a comparatively small fraction of the whole Christian body. It is among us that the cardinal Christian principles of liberty and fraternity have taken deepest root; but how

chary are our churches to see and accept all that this principle involves! As history shows, nowhere has the dogmatic spirit been more regnant than at the very headquarters of Congregational Protestantism, and wherever that spirit lives Christian freedom in the truth and in love cannot be allowed its full birthright. Such is the condition of things within our Christian churches.

But what is to be said of that larger Christendom which includes the masses of nominal Christian peoples? It is just here that the historical outlook is most discouraging. Nothing is more certain than that our churches, as Christian organizations, representing traditional Christianity, are for some reason slowly losing their hold upon the outside world. I am not now raising the question whether the original religion of Christ or the religious spirit in general is declining. The contrary, in my view, is true. I am speaking of our church organizations that have held the position of Christian leadership and authority hitherto and have claimed to truly represent Christ and his gospel. It is a fact which cannot be gainsaid, that this age is witnessing a movement away from organized Christianity such as was never before known in its history. Explain it as we may, the fact must be accepted as one of the most significant of our times. Figures here are of small account. The real question is, what are the leading moral and religious forces in human society and life, and whither are they tending? I am aware that

different answers may be given, according to the point of view, and it must remain a matter to a large degree of individual opinion. But it is my own deliberate judgment, formed from a long and careful survey, with some exceptional opportunities for reaching a true result, that traditional Christianity, with its old creeds and dogmas and forms, is passing as a religious force out of the great currents of thought and belief among the intelligent masses of men and women with a rapidity that is simply alarming to every open-eyed Christian observer. Let it be understood that I am not attempting to decide whether the organized Christian forces or the unorganized moral forces of the outside world are now the stronger, but simply to discern *whither the drift is* to-day. Organized religion, like organized law, always has behind it the power of custom and legal rescript and organized instrumentalities and that weight of unthinking attachment to what is old which is always to be found on the traditional conservative side. But even laws that remain on the statute book eventually become a dead letter when the ruling forces of society cast them aside, and such is the drift of these forces to-day as respects those dogmas and rites of Christianity which science and historical criticism have found to be the outgrowth of the ages of blind faith and superstition. Social and moral and even religious leadership is silently but surely passing from our organized religious bodies to that great judgment-seat of the educated masses

of our multitudinous city and country communities. There was a time, and not so long since, when the churches and church leaders and religious newspapers could move public sentiment from centre to circumference on any religious question that pertained to ecclesiastical or doctrinal orthodoxy. How far this is from true today all know. Moral leadership among us no longer depends on church membership. Would we learn whither the moral forces are running and whence their head-springs, we have only to ask what intelligent people are reading most, and what is the character of the literature that is passing through the largest number of editions. Are our novels and daily and Sunday secular newspapers and magazines written and edited as a rule by members of our churches, and in the interest of the dogmas of traditional orthodoxy? He must be an ignorant man or a brave man who will assert it. The *Zeitgeist* leavens our literature as well as our science and history, and through these channels is flooding Christendom with its new religious ideas. Let this tide sweep on a few years longer and can there be any doubt what the result must be? One of two things will surely happen. Either organized Christianity will cease to be a ruling force, or it will have been regenerated to a new life and thus able to regain its waning moral authority.

Thus, as we draw towards the conclusion of our comparative historical survey, we find the Chris-

tian religion exposed to dangers both without and within. Without, the ancient Ethnic religions remain fixed in their ancestral boundaries, with dogma ranged against dogma, and superstition against superstition, and ready still to meet Christianity on its own ground of dogmatic argument; within, schism, sectarian rivalry, and disagreement — the fruits of national and civil religious wars whose wounds are not yet healed — still divide it into numerous opposing camps fighting under different banners; and last, but not least, the transformed spirit of a new age has risen up against its traditional dogmas and pretensions and threatens to cast it wholly aside.

But our survey is not yet complete. It remains for us to take a closer view of the *organized church*, and see how far it is prepared to meet and solve the problems that are forcing themselves upon its attention and are menacing its very life. Such a view reveals two great and imminent perils growing out of its intellectual and moral condition. These perils will form the subject of the two following chapters.

CHAPTER VI

TWO PERILS OF ORGANIZED CHRISTIANITY

I. *Ignorance*

It is one of the most remarkable facts of our times that large numbers of our intelligent ministers and church members who are quite alive to the significance of the new revelations of God and his truth that have recently been made through scientific and historical channels, and are ready to accept the law of natural and historical evolution up to a certain point, yet shut their eyes persistently against the results of this law when it is brought, as it must be, into the sphere of religion and its dogmatic traditions. Such persons will not allow "the faith once delivered," as they fondly call these traditions, to be disturbed. Not a few churches to-day are declaring that scientific and historical criticism is a traitor in the Christian camp. Such a charge is indeed strange as coming from educated men, and can be explained only as illustrating the tremendous power of a dogmatic presupposition. It may be hoped that, with the inevitable decay of the dogmatic spirit, this class of opponents of religious progress will soon disappear. But a more serious question arises

when the position of the less educated members of the churches throughout Christendom, Catholic and Protestant, is considered. Here it is not a case of a dogmatic presupposition which shuts the eyes, but that of a real and profound ignorance as to the character of the changes which science and history are bringing about in all matters of human life, and especially as to the effect of these changes on religious dogmas. This class still forms the majority of church members in all Christian organizations. It does not require a very large acquaintance with the history of the church to enable one to realize what a dead weight in the path of all religious or theological movement such a mass of ignorance is. The fact that this class is so sincere in its beliefs only makes the danger the greater. Religious conscientiousness when stimulated by bigotry is capable of the highest unreason. Nothing is so stubborn or so fanatical as a wrongly instructed conscience, as Paul showed in his own case by his own confession. Only skillful leadership is required to fix a large portion of Christendom in an attitude of hostile opposition to the strongest intellectual and moral currents of our times; and such leadership is not wanting. This is true not only of the Catholic authorities, but also of a considerable portion of the Protestant church officials. Even in our free and independent Congregational churches there are those who would raise the old cry of heresy in order to excite an ignorant prejudice if it could be of any avail. So that it

becomes a serious question whether the great body of church members throughout Christendom is not on the point of breaking with the dominant religious spirit of the age, and of thus widening the chasm between the organized church and the outside world. Already it can be seen that large numbers of intelligent representative men and women are looking elsewhere than to the church for religious leadership and authority: and this is the reason undoubtedly why so many of this class hold themselves aloof from church membership. No wonder that churchmen are marking the drift away from our church organizations, and are devising ways and means to arrest it. But "forward movements," — to use the phrase now in vogue, — along old lines of Christian activity, will be found largely futile. Spasmodic revivalistic meetings here and there will heal the hurt slightly. The disease is deeper than the old methods of diagnosis reach. To be effectual the remedy must go as deeply as the disease and work healing from the roots. The real ailment is not mere worldliness and unspirituality, as is so generally assumed. These religious defects are of course always incidental to man's life on earth; but in the present state of our churches they are only symptomatic of a deeper trouble. The radical ailment is to be found in the fact that our churches are still wedded to forms of religious truth and to churchly theories and methods that are out of joint with our times. For such a disease there is but one

efficacious remedy. As so often in political emergencies, so now in religion, what is imperatively demanded is *a campaign of education*, — a forward movement all along the line in harmony with the new revelations of God's truth. I am not insensible to the signs of movement in the church itself. I know how widespread is the spirit of inquiry within the church as well as without, and how greatly the interest in Bible study has been quickened in these latter years. But everything depends on the *character* of such study. Take the case of the young in our Sunday-schools and Bible classes. Better no study at all than a study along the old lines of theological instruction. Nothing can be worse for a child to-day than to have its mind filled with religious ideas and impressions that will be found in later years to rest on unhistorical tradition. Yet the teachers in our Sunday-schools are too often young persons who are utterly unfitted to explain the Scriptures, being ignorant of the simplest principles of Biblical criticism. If there was ever a time when our best educated Christians should be put in charge of the religious instruction of the young it is now. In every community a class should be formed of all candidates for the post of a religious teacher, which should be placed under the direct supervision of some person whose fitness will win the respect and confidence of the community at large.

Moreover, it is a time when timidity of religious leadership should cease, and give place to

courageous action. Too long has the excuse been that the people are not prepared for such religious changes. Such an excuse implies lack of faith in God and his providence, as well as failure to read the signs of the times. Knowledge is running to and fro, and is increased as never before. The new science and history permeates not only our higher institutions of learning and our literature, but even the very air we breathe, and for the church to ignore such a fact is to be false to its highest and plainest moral duty. To fall back in such a crisis on God's care of his church and quote Christ's words, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," is worse than in vain. What Christ meant by his "church" he himself explained: "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." To make this the charter and refuge of any historical organization is to miss and falsify the deep spiritual significance of Christ's words. Yet it is not surprising that such a false interpretation was soon accepted. The world was not ripe for a spiritual church when Christ entered it. As early as the second century Christian leaders began to misunderstand the teachings of their master. Irenæus, stanch churchman that he was, opposing heretics and schismatics, asserted that "where the church is, there is the spirit of God," from which he drew the inference that all who were separate from the church, as an external organization, were cut off from the influences of the Holy

Ghost. Only one step more needed to be taken to complete this wholly unchristian view, namely, that the church with its bishops in historical succession from the Apostles, and with the sacraments administered by them, is the true kingdom of God on earth, outside of which there is no confident ground of salvation; and this step was taken a little later by Cyprian, the first highchurchman clearly known to history. Of course such a high-church doctrine has little footing among us who are descendants of the Pilgrim Puritans of New England, but I am not so sure that the idea is not deeply rooted in the minds of many good Congregational people that our church organizations *as organizations* are somehow of truly divine origin and authority (*jure divino*), and are the only representatives and repositories of God's truth and grace. Such persons ought to read carefully the seven epistles to the seven churches of Asia, and remember that the warnings there uttered were afterwards historically fulfilled. Those "seven candlesticks" were "moved out of their places," and "the seven churches which are in Asia" have been extinct so long that history fails to preserve any definite account of their dissolution. Nor was this case an isolated one. The same thing has happened again and again in Christian annals. Let me give a single further illustration. In the second, third, and fourth centuries the most flourishing churches in Christendom were those in North Africa. For a time,

in the persons of Cyprian and Augustine, this portion of the Christian world became the very centre of ecclesiastical and theological influence. But what is the case to-day? Not only are all these churches extinct, but Christianity itself has departed, leaving no trace behind but a few dismal ruins, and Mohammedanism in its most bigoted form fills the land. Surely history proves one thing, if nothing else, that no institution, however sacred its claim, can live simply on its past. Least of all can such an anachronism have any chance of life to-day. The church, like all things else, cannot hope to survive in its present form if it loses the respect and confidence of men; and this is one of the dangers that beset our Christian organizations to-day. How can intelligent men and women whose ears are filled with the new voices of God's providence respect an organization that claims to speak in God's name and yet remains deaf to such divine voices and even strives to stifle them? It is simply impossible.

But ignorance is not the only peril that threatens the organized church; there is another peril, and perhaps it is the greater.

CHAPTER VII

TWO PERILS OF ORGANIZED CHRISTIANITY

II. *Insincerity*

If it be true that "ignorance is the mother of superstition," it is equally true that insincerity is the mother of hypocrisy. When Christ called the orthodox leaders of his day "hypocrites," he probed them to the core, and his bold words cost him his life. It is the cardinal peculiarity of this moral vice that it juggles with itself and wears with a kind of honesty the face of the loftiest virtue; the deceiver is also self-deceived. Its root lies hidden in the darkest corner of the soul, covered with all the multitudinous motives that govern moral action. The notable thing about it is that its favorite haunt has always been in that region of human nature where the *religious* sentiments and emotions, with all their superstitious accompaniments, are centred and hold sway. History shows that in no sphere of human society has hypocrisy played so large a part or entailed on the world such calamitous results as in that of religion. It is one of the noblest features of Christ's gospel that its keynote is complete sincerity in thought, word, and deed. Paul, too, seems

to have caught the real spirit of his master. But Christianity quite early became infected with ideas inherited from pre-Christian ethics. The history of Christian casuistry in the matter of truthfulness and the lawfulness of deception in certain exceptional cases is deeply interesting and instructive. A book might be written on it. Only a summary, however, can here be given, simply that we may understand the real character of the moral danger that now threatens Christendom.

The ethical system of Plato and Aristotle, from which the Græco-Roman Christianity so largely drew its ethical ideas, was in the main a noble one and based on just moral principles. Plato, in his Republic, which deals with justice, strikes at once the keynote of his whole ethical philosophy, when he quotes a passage from Æschylus, in which the poet describes the good man as not wishing merely to appear to be good to others, but to be good in reality: Οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλει. "The true lie," Plato says, "is hated of gods and men," and he adds in explanation, "no one will admit falsehood into that which is the truest and highest part of himself or about the truest and highest matters." Plato further holds that God "can never lie or deceive in any way," since such deception is contrary to his whole nature. It was on this ground that Plato opposed the use of Homer and other poets in education, because in their poems the gods were described as "deceiving mankind." But Plato recognized cer-

tain cases where a "lie in words" is necessary; for example, in dealing with sick or insane persons. Hence he was led to make a curious distinction between "the true lie" and the "lie in words," which latter he defines as "only a kind of imitation and shadowy image of a previous affection of the soul, not a pure unadulterated falsehood." Such a verbal lie, he holds, may "in certain cases be useful and not hateful." Yet realizing, as Plato plainly did, how easily this exception to the rule might be taken advantage of in the interests of injustice, he added the following express limitation: "Truth should be highly valued; if, as we were saying, a lie is useless to the gods, and useful only as a medicine to men, then the use of such medicines should be restricted to physicians; private individuals have no business with them." Here follows a sentence which has become famous in Christian ethics, where Plato declares that "the rulers of the state may be allowed to lie for the public good," while all private persons should be forbidden this privilege and punished for practicing it. It is thus clear that Plato's ethics were essentially sound; and his famous exception must be allowed in some cases to hold good. No man of common sense would hesitate to deceive an insane man or a robber or a murderer, if by such deception he could prevent an act of frenzy or a crime. This was just what Plato meant by his "royal lie." But what was plainly an exceptional and superficial element in

Plato's ethics of truthfulness grew more and more to be an important element of Christian morals, and in the form of the "*officiosum mendacium*" has had a remarkable history. Plato's theory of the "royal lie" seems to have entered Christian ethics largely through Philo, who uses it in explaining certain apparently contradictory passages in the Old Testament in relation to the character of God. Here, however, Philo goes beyond Plato, making God the chief agent in the use of falsehood for the good of men, whereas Plato denied that God could have anything to do with deception in any way whatever, and restricted its use to human rulers for the good of the state. This Philonic enlargement of Plato's exception deeply affected Christian thought. Its leaven clearly appears in the writings of Origen, who as a theologian and exegete was the most influential Father of the early church. The influence of Aristotle should also be noted. In his "Nicomachean Ethics" Aristotle treats of truthfulness (iv. 9), illustrating his general doctrine of virtue as a mean between extremes, and making truthfulness to be the mean between exaggeration or overstatement and dissimulation or concealment of the real truth. With Plato, Aristotle makes truthfulness essentially an inward moral state rather than an outward act, though he does not make so much of Plato's discrimination between the "true lie" and the "verbal lie," and regards truthfulness in words as the natural accompaniment of truthfulness of soul. The vir-

tuous man, he says, "is true in life and word, simply because he is in a certain moral state." Thus Aristotle corrected in a degree the vacillating tendency of Plato; and it is due to the reputation which he enjoyed in the Middle Ages that the great Catholic schoolmen, such as Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas, were saved from defending the "*officiosum mendacium*" in its most glaring forms. Yet their treatment of the whole subject is implicit proof of the hold which a perverted Christian tradition continued to have even on the minds of the most enlightened leaders of the Catholic church.

There was another source of Christian ethics concerning truthfulness which cannot be overlooked. The Old Testament was the first Christian Bible, and the accounts of the deceptions practiced by Abraham, Jacob, Rahab, David, and other Hebrew saints had no little influence in neutralizing the natural effect of the teaching of Christ and Paul. The use made of such Old Testament examples by Thomas Aquinas and others in defense of the "*officiosum mendacium*" is highly suggestive, and helps us to understand the ease with which exceptions to the law of truthfulness gained entrance into Christian morals. I can give only a few illustrations of the process by which such violations came to be regarded as lawful. It began very early in the efforts to defend Christianity against pagans and heretics. It was assumed that the end sanctified the means; that truth might be

violated in defense of "the truth." A new principle of interpretation was applied to Scripture which enabled any dogma to be foisted into it, namely, that of a double or triple sense of a passage. Augustine went so far as to declare that a dozen different interpretations might be given to the opening chapters of Genesis, and all of them be true. Behind this vicious exegesis is to be seen Philo's theory that God may indulge in a sort of deception in his revelations of himself to man. As the church began to proceed with increasing severity against the various heretical schools that were springing up, it became customary for such persecuted sects to practice concealment of their peculiar opinions, on the ground that the end sanctified the means, and that the truth is not for all men. This led the orthodox party to descend to a like dissimulation, in order to discover the real doctrines of their opponents. A bishop of Antioch went so far as to pretend to be in full agreement with a leader of one of these sects, and in this way managed to extort a confession from him which was then used against him and his whole party. As the spirit of dogmatism and persecution increased, and controversies arose within the church itself, the same practice of evasion and concealment entered the ranks of orthodoxy. So far was this carried that in the General Council of 449, known as the "Robber Synod," bishops were forced to sign blank papers which were afterwards filled out by the party in the majority with such a

creed as they desired. These men confessed their mendacious conduct afterwards at the Council of Chalcedon, and excused it on the ground of compulsion and fear. A vivid illustration of the sad demoralization that befell Christian morality in the matter of truthfulness is found in the way in which the Origenistic party in the sixth century parried an attack of their enemies. When a synod had condemned the doctrines of the great Origen, the party leaders, to use the language of Neander, "sacrificed the truth, to save their own interests and that of their party. They likewise subscribed the decrees of the synod and consequently nothing could be done to them." It is no wonder that the noble moral feelings of Augustine rebelled against these lax principles which were passing from the East to the West. When it was proposed that the church should employ the dissimulation practiced by the Priscillianists against them, Augustine opposed it earnestly and wrote his work, "*Contra Mendacium*," in which he was led to take an extreme position, holding that under no circumstances, even to save honor or life, was a falsehood in thought, word, or deed morally allowable. Augustine had previously been induced to go to this extreme by a controversy with Jerome, who defended the dissimulation of Peter at Antioch. But, powerful as Augustine was, he could not overcome the current that was flowing more and more strongly toward the allowance of prevarication in all cases where the interests of Christian

truth were supposed to be at stake. It is impossible here to illustrate the infamous excesses to which the doctrine of legitimate falsehood was carried. The whole history of mediæval Christianity is filled with the most shocking examples. Perhaps the most famous illustration — famous in view of its superabounding infamy — was the treatment of John Huss, whose safe-conduct, given to him by the Emperor Sigismund, was canceled by the General Council at Constance on the express ground that no faith was to be kept with heretics, it being assumed that if a man was convicted of a certain crime the church was absolved from the guilt of committing a worse one. Surely the lowest depths of moral baseness were reached in this act of the largest council ever assembled in Christendom; and it is no wonder that the blush which mantled the face of Sigismund, when Huss fixed his eye upon him before the whole council and reminded him of the safe-conduct he had given without any conditions, is historic. What Christian man does not himself blush as he reads the pitiful story?

But why, it may be asked, have I stopped to indulge in this historical digression? I answer, because it lies behind and explains, as nothing else can, the deep current of insincerity in matters of religion which is still eating as a canker into the heart of Christendom. We have heard much of Jesuit casuistry, as if it were peculiar to the Catholic church. It is true that the "*officiosum*

mendacium" with its fatal leaven remained in the old historic church after the Protestant revolt, and that the Jesuit order has undoubtedly made great use of it. But it is a historical blunder to assume that the Lutheran Reformation involved any radical change in traditional theology or ethics. Not only were the great creeds and dogmas of the old church retained, but they were even stiffened and made more than ever the essentials of Christian faith; and deeply imbedded in these dogmas and in the methods of defense of them was the "*officiosum mendacium*" with its allowance of dissimulation and falsehood "that good may come." The historical fact is that the Protestant revolt did not quite break the chains of mental and moral slavery which the church had been forging for centuries and binding more completely on the necks of men. Even our own Puritan forefathers, who had come as pilgrims to these shores that they might have "freedom to worship God," when once settled here straightway began to forget the lesson which persecution at the hands of their own Protestant brethren in the mother country had only half taught them. The history of the New England Congregational churches is tragical with the bitter wrestlings, even in their birth, of the two sons whom Paul described as "the child of bondage" and "the child of liberty," and though in this new age the child of liberty named by Paul "the child of promise" is fast nearing its full manhood, the end is not yet. Let it not, then, be too hastily

assumed that even the Protestant portion of Christendom is wholly free from its long inherited curse of mental and moral slavery. The great error of the church has always been its assumption of authority over the souls of men in all matters of faith and dogma; and the natural fruits of dogmatic authority have always been and always will be insincerity, hypocrisy, cant, and all their evil brood. Until that yoke is completely broken everywhere in Christendom its results are bound to appear. There are other forms of dogmatic bondage besides fear of death. The halter and the stake have indeed been banished. Heterodoxy is no longer treated as a crime. But the more hidden and insidious forms of theological persecution — suspicion, prejudice, calumny — have by no means lost their power; and they are doing their enslaving work as truly and effectually to-day, within the limits of the church, as ever in its history. In fact, the more hidden and stealthy are the processes by which these intimidating forces act, the more effective do they become, within the sphere of their influence. Remember that I am not speaking of the outside world, whose mental and religious freedom is quite complete. It is the members of our church organizations with whom I am now concerned, who are under the sway of historical church traditions; and my object is to make clear the fact that the peril which above all others menaces the church, as a Christian organization, to-day, is an inherited virus of insincerity

and hypocrisy whose poison permeates the whole body. Does this statement surprise any one, and call forth protest or denial? Let us, then, look facts squarely in the face. It is difficult on such a point to call witnesses. Nor do I intend to do so; but I make my appeal to the inner moral consciousness of men, both within the church and without it. What is the most startling fact in the present theological situation? Is it not that our church leaders throughout Christendom have been hiding themselves behind theological makeshifts of every kind, setting forth new truth under old labels, or old truth under new ones, filling old bottles with new wine or new bottles with old ingredients, so that hearers are mystified and left in complete theological confusion? Let me give a single illustration from my own personal observation. Some years since I fell into a conversation with a minister of my acquaintance on the subject of Christ's miraculous birth. He told me of his troubles over it, and of the way he took to solve them. He went to a friend who stood in high moral as well as literary repute, and put the question to him, whether he believed that Jesus was born in a miraculous way. The reply came quickly and sharply: "Impossible! Impossible! I cannot believe it." This answer from a man for whose moral consciousness the minister had the greatest respect seems to have ended his dilemma. He had made his appeal to the practical, intelligent, common sense of a highly respected man of the

world, and the answer he received seemed to have settled the question for him completely and finally. Yet years after this occurrence my ministerial acquaintance was reciting the Apostles' Creed in his church services every Sunday, in which are the words: "Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." I do not give this case as if it were remarkable. No doubt it is being repeated in the history of not a few pastors and churches. Perhaps there are those who see no wrong in it, and would defend it as a lawful use of the "*officiosum mendacium*." But how does the world judge it? Will not the strictest moralist declare that no better example could be given of a low moral sense of what the law of Christian veracity demands? There is no form of insincerity that is so injurious to the principle of truthfulness as that which hides itself in such a way and wears the garb of a pious dissimulation. So deeply ingrained in our religious life has the habit become that such an illustration of it as I have given no longer attracts attention. It is remarkable how long men can continue to live under the forms of an old tradition, even when its real life is utterly gone. How true to nature is Tennyson's description of "Use and Wont," —

> "Old sisters of a day gone by,
> Gray nurses, loving nothing new."

Most men dislike to be disturbed or awakened out of their intellectual or religious slumbers. Should another Rip Van Winkle awake from a half cen-

tury's nap and enter one of our churches on the Lord's day he would scarcely realize how long he had slept. Some innovations would arrest his attention. The congregation would take a somewhat larger part in the service, and a new note might strike his ear occasionally in the quality of the preaching; but the general order of exercises would have the old familiar air. He would recognize at once the old forms of Scripture reading with the old interpretations, involving the old assumptions, the old hymns of Watts and Wesley, with all their crude materialism, the old-time formulas of prayer, from prayer-books of the sixteenth century, and even from still earlier times; and he might shut his eyes for another nap, assured that all is well, — never realizing that the most stupendous intellectual revolution of history has left its mark on every phase of human thought. I remember well the moral shock which I experienced when I first learned that the Calvinistic trinitarian hymns of Dr. Watts, which had fed the religious faith of my childhood, were written by an Arminianizing Arianizing Sabellian. But in what respect was Dr. Watts worse than ministers and churches today, who still sing his hymns and others like them, and excuse themselves by professing to accept their theological truth "for substance of doctrine." But such illustrations are mere straws on the surface of the deep stream. *This* is the real, the transcendent issue. Most, if not all, educated men are aware that the Darwinian law of evolu-

tion in its full application in all departments of science, and in historical research, has radically changed all the old conceptions of nature, of man, and of God. They know well that the very foundations of the old traditional theology are utterly broken down, and that wholly new forms of truth must take their place. Yet how few of our church leaders are ready to make full acknowledgment of this, and honestly take their stand on it! A tacit conspiracy of silence has shut their mouths. And how is this policy defended? It is said that "Kant once confessed that though he would never say anything he did not believe, he believed many things he would never say" (Paulsen, "System of Ethics," 682). Paulsen well adds: "A Greek might have replied to him, 'In that case I do not care very much for what you have to say, for I desire to know, not what you are allowed to think with the consent of the high authorities, but what you actually think yourself.'" Kant has here well expressed the trend of recent theological apology as regards a full and honest confession of Christian faith. Aristotle made truthfulness to consist in the avoidance of two extremes, — the expression of what is false and *the repression of what is true*. It is the second extreme — called by Aristotle dissimulation — that is so rife to-day. And the Greek pagan was ethically right. A negative lie is as truly a lie as a positive one. Intentional deception, which is the essence of a falsehood, is equally behind both forms of it. A man who

recites with a congregation a creed which he does not believe, except with a mental reservation, is guilty of an act of dissimulation which no casuistry can excuse, and which the enlightened moral consciousness of every man must condemn. It is the peculiar moral quality of the "*officiosum mendacium*," in either of its forms, and especially in that of the "*suppressio veri*," that it so successfully arrays itself in angelic garb. To do a little evil that great good may come has been the favorite appeal of the tempter from Eden down, and never has he applied his arts more skillfully and successfully than in these recent times in the very heart of Christendom. Strange, indeed, that the old Greek Aristotle should become the ethical teacher of a degenerate Christianity! Yet not so strange. The taint is in the very blood of many generations. The old distinctions between the church and the world, ecclesiasticism and secularism, religion and morality, what is true and right in religious things and what is true and right in temporal things, — distinctions which lay behind the whole church theory of the "*officiosum mendacium*," — have not yet faded out, even among Protestant theologians.

The history of modern Biblical exegesis furnishes many memorable illustrations of this. Pious and scholarly exegetes have applied canons of interpretation to Scripture which they would never have dared to apply to any other book in the world, — it being assumed that the Bible, as the

Word of God, is to be discriminated from all human writings, and so is to be interpreted on different principles. The worst of it is that these principles are often utterly discordant with ordinary rules of human interpretation. Is it surprising, then, that such unnatural scriptural exegesis should often involve evasions of the Aristotelian law of truthfulness? Let me give a single instance, which I choose out of many equally *à propos*, because it brings out so clearly how close is the affinity between the theological dissimulation that infects the Christianity of to-day and that of the early church. In the opening verses of the seventh chapter of the Fourth Gospel there occurs a conversation between Jesus and his brethren which from the earliest times has troubled Christian exegetes. We are told that in view of the approaching Feast of Tabernacles Christ's brethren ironically urged him to go into Judæa and show himself publicly. The reply of Christ was a simple refusal. "Go ye up unto the feast; I go not up unto this feast because my time is not yet fulfilled." Such was the reading of the text in the time of Porphyry and of Jerome. The later change from οὐκ to οὔπω, which appears in the *Textus receptus*, and is translated "not yet," in the King James version, was made, according to Alford, "to avoid offense." What the "offense" was is made known to us by Jerome. In a work against the Pelagians, who held strongly to free will and the natural power of every man to avoid sin, Jerome quotes

many passages of Scripture to show the contrary. He even quotes Christ as saying, "I can of myself do nothing," and then, in further illustration of Christ's inability, he adds, "he denies to his brethren that he is going up to the Feast of Tabernacles, and afterwards it is written that when his brethren had gone up then he himself went up, not openly, but as if in secret. *He denied that he should go, and did what he had before denied.* Porphyry barks at this, charging Christ with fickleness and inconstancy, not knowing that all yieldings to temptation should be referred to the flesh (*nesciens omnia scandala ad carnem esse referenda*)." The things to be especially noted in this passage from Jerome are that Jerome's text had οὐκ, not οὔπω, and that he does not attempt to evade the natural meaning of it, but explains Christ's evasion of the truth on the ground of his temptable human nature. Porphyry brought a similar charge against Peter and Paul; and Jerome, in his defense of them, is led to give a curious interpretation of Gal. ii. 11–14, asserting that the altercation which arose between Peter and Paul and Peter's apparent dissimulation were the result of their different points of view, and that really both of them were exercising the highest Christian prudence. He even suggests that the contention between them was feigned (*simulata*) in the interests of peace between Jewish and Gentile Christians, and he defends the whole transaction on the ground that dissimulation for the time may

be useful (*utilem vero simulationem et assumendam in tempore*), referring to two Old Testament examples, that of Jehu in the matter of the priests of Baal, and that of David in the case of Abimelech. It was this distinct avowal of the lawfulness at times of a deception which involved a lie that led Augustine to write to Jerome a letter which was the beginning of a sharp though friendly controversy. One of Jerome's letters in reply is of prime importance in the history of Christian morals. In it he informs Augustine that his position was not new, but that many Fathers before him, especially Origen, had held the same view, and adds apologetically that they did not so much defend a lie as treat it as an act of honorable temporizing and prudence ("*non officiosum mendacium sed honestam dispensationem et prudentiam*"). Thus Jerome showed himself ready, with Origen and others before him, to defend the use of a lie even by Christ in the interest of prudence and utility. It did not even occur to him that a change from οὐκ to οὔπω would lessen the difficulty. It was the later refinements of theological exegetes that led to the interpolation of οὔπω. But this refuge has failed since the discovery that the original text was οὐκ rather than οὔπω. How now were the words of Christ to be defended, and he be saved from an open falsehood? Was the view of Jerome to be accepted, which allowed mendacity on Christ's part, but excused it as an infirmity of the flesh? The development of the

dogma of Christ's absolute sinlessness made it impossible. Some other solution of this moral puzzle must be found. It is here that my illustrations of modern exegesis become appropriate, and afford telling evidence of the tendency to suppress or distort the truth in matters of religion. Lardner, in his work "The Credibility of the Gospel History," deals with this question quite at length. He allows that the earlier reading was οὐκ, and that Christ's reply to his brethren's advice was, "I go not up to the feast." He then adds: "Supposing this to be the true reading, I see not any reason for the charge of inconstancy, or of our Lord's altering his intention. The context shows that he had spoken of deferring his journey to Jerusalem for a short time, not that he had resolved not to go at all to the feast. He went to the feast; *and he always intended to do so;* but he went not up to that feast *so soon or so publicly* as he did at some other seasons." Without raising any question as to the correctness of Dr. Lardner's interpretation, I have this to say, that his explanation does not exculpate Christ at all, or even attempt to, from the charge of an intentional deception of his brethren. They could not read his inner intentions, and plainly accepted his words in their natural meaning. The real question is, not whether Christ changed his mind, but *whether he deceived his brethren and meant to do so.* I quite agree with Dr. Lardner that Christ did not change his mind, but how about the deception that

lurks behind Christ's words, "I go not up to this feast"? Dr. Lardner here is silent. How must we interpret this silence? Did he wish to conceal the difficulty under a disingenuous evasion of it, or was he ready to excuse Christ's reply as a lawful *mendacium?* I leave it for my readers to judge. The work of Dr. Lardner belongs to the eighteenth century.

My second illustration is from the commentary of Dean Alford, whom I have been accustomed to regard as one of the noblest and most honest of Christian writers. Accepting οὐκ as the true reading, and explaining correctly the reason of the later interpolation, Alford then says: "It is of little import whether we read οὐκ or οὔπω; the sense will be the same, both on account of the present ἀναβαίνω (not ἀναβήσομαι, which would express the disavowal of *an intention* to go up), and of οὔπω afterwards. Οὐκ ἀναβαίνω would mean '*I am not at present* going up.'" As one reads this amazing comment, a momentary doubt arises whether Alford's scholarship was at fault or his moral sincerity. His suggestion that the use of the present, ἀναβαίνω, confines the act of going up to the "present" time and must be translated, "I am not at *present* going up," is in violation of one of the commonest laws of all languages, let alone the New Testament Greek. How often do we use the present tense when the reference is to some future act? Buttmann, in his Grammar of New Testament Greek, remarks that "the present fre-

quently stands when things still future are spoken of, and consequently comprises within itself the future force of the word," and adds that this "phenomenon is common in all ages and all languages." Among other illustrations he refers to the passage now under discussion. He also refers to Matt. xx. 18, where the same present ἀναβαίνω is used in a plainly future sense. Winer, in his Grammar, takes virtually the same ground, though more guardedly, holding that "an action still future is mentioned as already present, because it is unalterably determined." This is precisely the case in hand. Christ used the present, "I go not up," because he wished his brethren to understand it was not his *intention* to go up. Alford, on the contrary, declares that "the disavowal of an *intention* to go up" would require the future ἀναβήσομαι. I confess that I am somewhat at a loss to give a critical judgment on this curious piece of exegesis. But surely Alford cannot be accused of ignorance of Greek grammar, and least of all of one of its most common rules. Porphyry wrote in Greek as his vernacular, and Jerome was Greek scholar enough to translate the New Testament into Latin, yet it never occurred to either of them that Christ's use of the present implied that he meant to be understood as saying, "I am not *at present* going up." Alford was quite as good a Greek scholar as either Porphyry or Jerome. He must have known, as well as they, that the natural interpretation of the original text required the admission that, if the

account be true history, Christ intended to deceive his brethren.

How, then, was Alford led to write this extraordinary statement? There can be but one satisfactory answer. He held as an article of faith that Christ was God. He also accepted the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. He was thus ready to hold to the historicity of all the accounts in that gospel, and to believe that the words here imputed to Christ were actually uttered by him. Here, then, was an apparent falsehood put into Christ's lips. How could it be explained so that Christ's perfect sinlessness might be left unimpeached? Porphyry had charged him with moral fickleness. Jerome had defended his want of truthfulness by referring it to human weakness. But Alford could not accept either view. He felt called upon to defend Christ's moral perfectness at all hazards. Here, then, if ever, was a case where a "useful dissimulation" might be allowed, if not in the conduct of Christ himself, at least in the exegesis of his loyal disciple. If a more humiliating bit of commentary can be found than this, I know not where to look for it. Yet, after all, Alford was not a sinner above others. I have characterized his exegesis of this passage as "humiliating," not because it is worse than other examples, but because it was the *dernier ressort* of a scholar usually so free from exegetical refinements. If I am asked whether I think that Alford was conscious of any disingenuousness, I reply at once,

surely not. "The Life, Journal, and Letters," edited by his widow, reveal a character of singular openness and honesty. He had the courage of his convictions. But he was a true son of the Church of England, and accepted the Nicene Creed without any qualification as absolute truth. His churchly conservatism is seen in his attitude toward Bishop Colenso's book on the "Pentateuch." In a letter to Colenso he distinguished "the *believing* point of view" from "the unbelieving (critical) point of view." "The former," he said, "assumes Jesus Christ to have been the Son of God. If he *was*, the Pentateuch is *historical, for he treats it as such*." Such a theological *a priori* assumption strikes at the root of the inductive historical method of critical investigation. It is here that Alford's deficiency as a commentator comes clearly to view. He was simply a *textual, not a historical* critic. His defense of the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel is a good illustration. He builds his argument on the crumbling foundations of unhistorical legend. Here was the fatal flaw in Alford's fitness to deal with the passage before us. Assuming the strict deity of Christ and the complete historicity of the Fourth Gospel, how could he save Christ from mendacity except by a straining of the text? It is pathetic to think how close at hand lay the "key of knowledge" which he sought in vain to find. We must not forget that Alford's "New Testament" was published before Darwin's "Origin of Species," and while historical

criticism was yet in its infancy. Could he only have grasped the historical fact that the Fourth Gospel is not Johannine, but the work of an unknown writer of the middle of the second century, and that the long conversations and discourses imputed to Christ are not to be regarded as really his beyond certain *logia* which tradition had brought down from Apostolic times, how different would his exegesis have been? I confess, for myself, that if the light I have gained on the "Johannine Problem" had brought me no other boon than this, that Christ is thereby saved for me from Porphyry's charge of fickleness and from Jerome's acknowledgment of falsehood, or from the lame defenses of later exegetes such as Lardner and Alford, I should be more than repaid for my long and anxious search. If the words, "I go not up," were not actually spoken by Christ, but were the work of a writer a century after Christ's death, then Christ is absolved from all responsibility for them; and the law of truthfulness and sincerity which he proclaimed so plainly in the Sermon on the Mount stands unmoved and secure.

Yet this should be said in palliation of Alford's remarkable interpretation. He was the victim of his theological environment, — an environment that was the outcome of a long evolution of theological exegesis which rested on the ethical theory that the *officiosum mendacium* was lawful when the interests of dogmatic truth required it. Augustine's passionate protest against the ten-

dency of his age had been without avail. Jerome, Lardner, Alford, are only straws showing whither the currents of exegetical ethics have been flowing during the entire history of Christianity down to the present day.

Let me add one or two further examples of the manner in which other distinguished commentators of the conservative school have dealt with the passage that has been under consideration. Few men of the nineteenth century were more famous for evangelical piety and learning than the German Tholuck. In his commentary on John he thus remarks on vii. 8, "If we follow the external authority of the Codices the reading of οὔπω must be preferred. But it may be asked, whether apologetic considerations have not given the preference to οὔπω before οὐκ." After referring to Porphyry's charge of fickleness and to Jerome's defense, both grounded on the earlier reading οὐκ, Tholuck adds: "But if with Bengel, Griesbach, and Knapp we should read οὐκ, no objection could be brought against it. *In a loose manner* of speaking it *may become synonymous with* οὔπω, as is clearly the case in vi. 17." The case of vi. 17 is not so "clear," and in fact has no relation to the case in hand. But if it had it would not help us. Suppose we allow that Christ spoke *loosely*, using οὐκ in the sense of οὔπω, the question is, did his brethren understand that he spoke *loosely* and meant to tell them that he was simply *deferring* his visit to Jerusalem, or did they understand him to say and

mean that he was not going up at all? The context surely can bear but one interpretation. *They did not suppose* that he used οὐκ "in a loose manner." Did Christ, then, intend to mislead them by a *double-entendre*, and if so, could a willful deception be more complete? In this quandary Tholuck leaves us to our own devices. Comment surely is unnecessary.

I now turn to a commentator who on the whole is to be regarded as the leading living exegetical scholar in the English church of the present generation, as was shown by his being made chairman of the British New Testament Revision Company. I refer to Bishop Ellicott. His interpretation occurs in his "Life of Christ" (Am. ed. 227). Ellicott rejects Meyers's supposition that Christ "here states his *intention* and afterwards *alters* it" as not borne out by the context, as it certainly is not. He also rejects "the explanation of De Wette and Alford" which I have given above, on the ground that "it seems neither so simple nor so natural" as his own, though he allows that it "is *perhaps* defensible." What now is the exegesis which Ellicott prefers to the others mentioned and squarely adopts as one that removes "*the apparent contradiction* that has been found between our Lord's words and his subsequent acts"? He makes the key to his explanation what he regards as a peculiar characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, namely, that Christ is everywhere represented as "the reader of the

thoughts and intents of the human heart," and thus in his conversations with men "did not so much reply to the *words* of the speaker as to the *thoughts* which he knew were rising up within." This he uses as a principle of interpretation in John vii. 8. Christ's brethren asked him whether he was going up to the feast. But the question implied "a worldly and self-seeking spirit." They wished him to go publicly and announce himself in a way to draw general attention. "It is to the spirit and meaning of this worldly and self-seeking request, rather than to the outward terms in which it was couched, that the Lord answered his brethren." "He does indeed *not* go up to the feast in the *sense* in which these carnal-minded men presumed to counsel him. He joins now no festal company; he takes now no prominent part in the festival solemnities." But *he goes all the same, in another sense* of his language, which sense, however, is of course wholly subjective and not understood by his brethren, who took his words *literally and not spiritually.* Such is Ellicott's explanation, which does not explain, for it leaves Christ in a worse moral plight than either of the other interpretations, since it makes him *deliberately* use a form of answer which he knew would wholly deceive them. It is assumed, of course, by Ellicott that Christ was fully aware of the character of their question, that it referred to his *going up* and not merely to the *manner* of it, and that his reply was not to *their question*, but to a *new*

question which he had drawn out of it. Yet Bishop Ellicott seems entirely satisfied with this explanation as saving Christ from untruthfulness. I am not here concerned whether this method of exegesis has absolved Christ from the moral delinquency in which the authentic text of this passage seems to involve him. My view of the history of the text makes such a method wholly unnecessary. What concerns me is, whether it can absolve Bishop Ellicott himself from a like delinquency. What must one think of the fineness of moral fibre of a Christian commentator who can descend to such a miserable "wresting of the Scriptures" as this, — "Scriptures," be it noted, which Bishop Ellicott regards as supernaturally inspired, and, in the case in question, the very language of the divine Son of God! Far be it from me even to suggest a suspicion that this eminent prelate has juggled with his conscience in his scholarly commentaries. Like Alford, Tholuck, and others, he was the creature of his age and of its traditional environment, and he only illustrates, in the very headquarters of official churchmanship, that hereditary moral taint the sources of which I have traced back to the origins of Christianity. I will only add that this comment of Bishop Ellicott is one of the worst specimens on record, in my view, of the spiritualizing method of interpretation which has been so popular in recent exegesis, and which is full of evidence of the unconscious disingenuous-

ness and insincerity that is so ingrained in the theological temper of our age.

I have dwelt thus at length on the subject of Biblical interpretation, because it gives so clear and conclusive evidence of the results of the theory of the *officiosum mendacium* which has played so influential a part in Christian theology and life. Christian exegetical scholars have as a rule been more free from the yoke of theological dogma than professed dogmatic theologians. Jerome was much more free in his exegetical views than Augustine. Alford was by no means a hard-and-fast dogmatist. If the exegetes can go so far in textual distortion to save an article of the orthodox creed, what may we expect of the metaphysical theologians? And if both exegetes and theologians are ready to play fast and loose with the law of veracity when the interests of what they regard as the truth demand it, what must we expect of the rank and file of Christians who have been accustomed to reverence and follow their chosen leaders? Can we wonder that our churches are honeycombed with elements of insincerity and hypocrisy, or that the world is ready to ask whether Christianity itself in its organized form, judging it by its moral exhibitions, is not an imposture and a sham? Surely, before the church can hope to convert nominal Christendom, still further, before it can become a missionary force that shall conquer the unchristian world, it must *first be converted itself.*

These words may have a severe and pessimistic sound. But the writer is no pessimist. No one can despair of the future who reads with any clear intelligence the signs of the times. Outside of the church at least there is readiness for the light, and freedom of thought, and an end of religious bigotry and dishonesty. And these moral forces are beginning to react on the church itself with silent but irresistible potency. Marvelous indeed would it be if it should come to pass that the unrecognized outside "sleeping partners" of the true kingdom of God should be the real leaders in the moral progress of the race, rather than the historical organizations that have so long assumed to be the only representatives of Christianity. Already such a movement has taken visible shape. The *Zeitgeist* is becoming conscious of its power. Organization, however deeply seated in old traditions, has ceased to be a fetich. The light of God's truth is as universal as that of the sun, and cannot be shut up in anybody's lantern, call that lantern by any sacred name you will. It is this that the world is finding out to-day, — thanks to the new science and the new history. The church, too, must soon learn the same lesson. It cannot continue much longer to resist the influences around it. Its closed doors and windows must be thrown wide open to the free air and light of heaven. And just here will begin the church's true regeneration. With freedom will quickly come an end of ignorance and of insincerity. Then

with open eyes men will read God's new revelations. Then it will be seen that the new truths of science and of historical criticism are not of man's building. Charles Darwin was not the author of that wonderful law of evolution which is revolutionizing all our conceptions of nature, of man, and of God. He only discovered what God himself in his own time had revealed, or, if one pleases, what nature had disclosed of its previously hidden processes as the providential interpreter of Him whose works are "parts of his ways." Surely in these days of God's outstretched hand human pride should give place to humility. Man's wisdom has indeed proved "foolishness." The garnered philosophy of ages has shriveled up as a scroll in the fire that tries every man's works. And why should we cling to it or regret it? The old monk's counsel was good: "Regret not that which is past." This is a day of promise and hope, not of unavailing regrets; a day of faith, not of skepticism; a day of optimistic courage and cheer, not of pessimistic lamentations. And in that hope and faith and cheer I seem to catch a vision of the days to come. Christianity has been like one of those old palimpsests where the original writing was buried and lost under a later script. Christ's own gospel had been transformed into "another gospel which was not a gospel." But God's providence has given us the subtle critical art by means of which the legendary accumulations of long ages have been removed, and the original teachings of

Christ once more brought out clearly to view; and lo, as I look on that old standard under which Christianity has so long fought, with its theological shibboleths, — dead embers of forgotten controversies, — a sudden and marvelous change comes over it: its traditional dogmatic creeds disappear like a mist of the morning, and in their place I read those recovered words of Christ which sum up his whole gospel: "*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another:*" and yet again the scene shifts and the vision of the seer of Patmos is fulfilled: "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And *the nations* of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and *the kings of the earth* do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the *nations* into it." What city is here described? Not any outward city of man's making, with its "temples" and "shut gates;" but the "New Jerusalem, coming from God out of heaven." In that city, open and free, and illumined by the sun of God's righteous love, "*all the nations* shall walk," and "there shall be *no night* there."

What interpretation should be given to this apocalyptic passage cannot be exactly determined. All apocalypse, as Neander has well said, has a "germinant and springing meaning and accomplishment." The Revelation does not claim to be history. It belongs to the realm of mystical theology, and must be interpreted by mystical or symbolical methods. Moreover, the authorship of the Revelation is unknown, so that it is impossible to gain light from the author's environment or religious point of view. Yet, notwithstanding all this, I cannot think that the radical thought of the writer is doubtful. Whoever he was, he had plainly somehow caught a glimpse of the final evolution of God's kingdom on earth, and sought to picture it in apocalyptic form. Beneath all its imagery three characteristics of the end of all things stand out clearly to view: 1. A world-wide united brotherhood of God's people. 2. God's own presence in their midst, making needless material gates for protection or material temples for worship. 3. A final state of perfect harmony and peace and joy; — which being translated into the new historical apocalypse of our own day should read thus: 1. The harmonizing and union of all the hitherto warring religions of the world through Christ's gospel, with its new interpretation of divine and brotherly love. 2. The tabernacling of God among men through his self-revelations as immanent in nature, in the world, and in all human souls, and thus becoming the spiritual bond of one

universal kingdom of truth and justice. 3. The final consummation of all things in a world-wide moral unity and peace.

Eighteen centuries have gone since the Revelation was written. Its jubilant hope, expressed in "Behold I come quickly," still remains an unfulfilled ideal. It has been one of the objects of this book to disclose some of the historical causes of the delay of God's coming.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW PROBLEM OF THEOLOGY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

This comparative historical survey has on the practical side reached its appropriate conclusion. But there still remains a question which cannot be without interest to all Christian thinkers. Religious faith must by a law of the human mind sooner or later be subjected to the inquisition of the reason and its critical processes. History shows that every religion tends to become a theology, and to guard and limit itself with a dogmatic creed. Hence the historical inductive method is called to deal not only with the history of religions, but also with their theological developments.

We have now reached a point of view where a comprehensive survey may be taken of the present religious possessions of the world and of their intellectual and theological relations to each other. In this way by the inductive process the foundations may be laid of the new theology which is to come.

It will be the aim of this chapter to set forth the real character of the new theological problem which the twentieth century finds at its door. This

problem has two distinct sides or aspects. One aspect of it has to do with the relation of religion to those scientific discoveries which have created for man in the new revelations of nature and its laws a new world. The other aspect of the problem grows out of those historical and critical investigations which have developed an entirely new conception not only of the historical origins of Christianity, but also of the origins and character of the Ethnic religions. The results of science and of the history of religions have together so transformed the whole field of religious faith and thought that a new philosophical or theological construction has become inevitable.

It is not my purpose to go over again the ground of my previous book. I do not propose now any further attempt at a construction of the new theology. What I have in mind is simply, from the wider and higher vantage ground reached in this historical survey of the trinitarian ideas of mankind concerning God, to put the new theological problem thus raised in its true historical setting, and thus to help towards its solution. Such a preliminary analysis and diagnosis is most needful. Physicians of every school are always with us. But most of the attempts to heal the religious maladies of our times have been of two sorts: "Forward Movements" in the churches and in missionary organizations and "Reconstructions in Theology." Plainly the theological doctors have become alive to the fact that the patient is dangerously ill; but

as to the character of the disease and the medicine to be administered there is great diversity of opinion. The mere list of remedies suggested only shows how much at sea the physicians are. As usual the traditionalists and metaphysicians are on hand with the old prescriptions. The question is whether it is not high time for the historical doctor to say his say. Strauss's keen and searching remark, "The true criticism of dogma is its history," may prove to be the very key we need. What lasting good can come from "forward movements" or from "theological reconstructions," if they proceed by wrong roads to take us only further away from the end sought? The *right start* must be made and the right *line of direction* taken, if a Christian advance is to issue in a final success and not in inglorious failure. To learn *what* the right start is and *what* the right line of direction, we need to use carefully and thoroughly the searchlights of history. Such is the form of investigation now proposed.

"The new problem of theology in the twentieth century" suggests at once a historical contrast with the problem of the century just closed. What was that problem and how was it solved? When the last century opened, the old theology in its most rigid and scholastic form held the field and was regnant in all orthodox circles. This theology had two poles, a Sabellianized trinitarianism, and a Calvinistic anthropology, which, however, was rapidly yielding to the dissolving influence of

Arminian ideas. The old creeds, however, remained intact and firm. Scientists and historical critics were quietly pursuing their investigations into nature and the sources of history, but their discoveries created no general alarm. Not till the middle of the century was the inevitable and essential antagonism between scientific and historical studies and the dogmas of traditional theology fully realized. Then followed a mortal conflict between the radical and vital principle of all science and historical criticism, — summed up in the Darwinian law of uninterrupted natural evolution, — and the traditional *a priori* principle of a supernatural intervention by special creation and miracle as the true historical explanation of the course of nature and of human events. This conflict, if we look at the nineteenth century from its theological side, marks more deeply and characteristically than any other its history as a whole. Consciously or unconsciously, all theological discussions and movements of any importance have taken their cue from the attitude of theologians toward the Darwinian doctrine of nature. For a generation after the publication of "The Origin of Species" the whole theological air was filled with the dust that was raised by dogmatic or timid theologians. But a strange lull has recently fallen upon the field of debate, for reasons that are too plain to remain doubtful. The truth is that it has become clear to the mass of intelligent men and women that if there is any radical antagonism between the ascer-

tained facts of science and historical criticism and the traditional dogmas of the old orthodoxy, it must mean that these dogmas are invalid and false. In fact, the new science and the new history have come to stay. The educated world has already accepted their fundamental premises and conclusions, however doubtful it may be as to certain subordinate questions. Thus the ground has been made historically clear for the new problem of theology in the century to come. There can be no doubt as to what its fundamental character must be. The century is to be marked by the *complete harmonizing and unifying of scientific, historical, and religious truth.* That this process will involve the utter downfall of the old theology in its traditional creed forms goes without saying. It must disappear with the old false science and history on which it was built, — as, for example, those exploded theories of creation as wrought in six days, of our earth as the centre of the universe, of a material heaven beyond the circumference of the starry vault, of a material hell deep in the centre of the earth, of the aerial region above and around us as filled with supernatural beings both good and bad, of men as subject in both body and soul to the "prince of the power of the air," through bewitchment or actual demoniacal possession, of this world as given over by God because of Adam's sin and fall to Satan, and thus made the scene of conflict between two spiritual kingdoms only to be terminated by the miraculous coming of the Son of God

for the everlasting destruction of evil and triumph of good. This whole mass of traditional superstition, which belongs essentially to one and the same class of uncritical beliefs, is rapidly dissolving like snow under the sun of summer and is giving place to a new order of religious ideas proceeding from a new scientific and critical principle of eternal and unchangeable law. Such is the problem in one aspect of it. Of course there are still many who would protest loudly against such a historical *résumé* and forecast. Organized Christianity, which hugs so tenaciously its historical traditions, will not give them up without a final struggle; but I believe that I am safe, as a historical observer, in the assertion that the decisive battle between science and religion is at an end, and that, so far as there was any real ground of conflict growing out of dogmas that were supposed to be essential to religious faith, science and its ally historical criticism have come off victors. The final *coup de grace* was given by historical criticism. The defenders of a miraculous Christianity have rested their arguments on the assumption that the Bible was a direct divine revelation, and that consequently its narratives were authentic history. Historical criticism has destroyed the very basis of this position by showing that its primary assumptions are untenable.

If one would realize how complete a change has been wrought in a single generation, as the result of critical research, let him look into a work of

Dr. McCosh entitled "The Supernatural in Relation to the Natural," published in 1862. Apparently Dr. McCosh was not aware that Darwin's epoch-making book had already appeared three years before. At least he does not allude to it in his own volume, though he was quite a scientific student and accepted much of the science of his day, especially the new astronomy and geology. Certainly had he realized what was the radically new position taken by Darwin as to the character of the origin and mode of development of nature in all its forms, he would have met it with an earnest demurrer, for he held strongly in his book to special acts of divine creation, and to the continuance of the miraculous element in history. The naïve way in which Dr. McCosh makes use of certain portions of the Bible, assuming without question their entire historicity, is truly astonishing. For example, he alludes to the account in the book of Daniel of "the three children of Israel who were thrown into the fiery furnace in Babylon" without a hint that it may not be accepted fact. So concerning Balaam's ass, he asserts that "We know enough to convince us that the ass could not speak except by a supernatural agency working in it," never once suggesting a doubt whether the ass did actually speak in human language. On the same principle he declares that the prophecies of the Old Testament were predictions of definite future historical events, "foretold hundreds or thousands of years beforehand," and hence

must be regarded as proofs of miraculous power and agency. He accepts the entire historicity of the narrative given in "The Acts" concerning what happened on the day of Pentecost, assuming with the completest assurance that "uneducated fishermen at once, without having been taught, addressed a multitude of persons gathered from a variety of countries each in his own language." How utterly the foundations of Dr. McCosh's whole argument have been undermined by Biblical criticism I need not say. What critical scholar to-day accepts the full historicity of any of these Scripture accounts? When Dr. McCosh laid down his primary philosophical thesis "that it is *not possible* for the inductive philosophers to be able to establish the doctrine of the uniformity of nature as *a law which can admit of no exceptions*," he surely little realized that a book was already in existence which would prove just such a uniformity of nature in the case of *species*, — the very case which Dr. McCosh had relied upon as the citadel of his own position. There are some to-day, apparently, who are leaning on the same broken reed. They are ready to accept the law of evolution to a certain point, but refuse to allow that there are no exceptions to it. Dr. Lyman Abbott, for example, admits the law to be inviolable and universal with a single exception, to wit, the miraculous birth of Christ. But if one event can lie outside of the law, what becomes of the law itself? A law of nature can no more allow a

single breach than a chain, the strength of which is gone if a single link be broken. The Darwinian law of natural evolution is true, unchangeably, and universally, or it is utterly false, and to be cast aside as unscientific.

In dealing thus with Dr. McCosh's book, I feel as if I were stirring the flickering embers of a dead issue. I have done so because I know of no better way to show how far behind us already have those theological questions drifted which some would assume to be still alive and mooted among us. In fact, when they are raised now and then, there is no attempt to answer them; the time and need of such discussion has gone irretrievably by. The law of natural evolution so signally proved and illustrated by Darwin in its application to all species of organic life, including man, is equally applicable in every other field of nature. Take the case of miracles. There are those who are ready to give up all miracles outside of the Bible, or even of the New Testament, but insist on the retention of the latter as if Christianity itself depended on their historical reality. But if the principle of the uniformity of nature has ever been broken once, by a single miraculous act through which natural law was violated or suspended, then the essential character of law has been invaded and a principle of natural disorder and contingency has been introduced, which makes the universe the sport of chance, and its essential character as a cosmos is gone. It is just as difficult for

the scientific or historical critic to accept a single miracle, in its theological meaning of a violation or suspension of law, as to accept a thousand.

Here, then, comes to view the very starting-point of any satisfactory and lasting solution of the new problem of theology. No half-way measures — no compromises between two antagonistic positions — can stand. There can be no real harmonizing of science and theology except on the basis of a complete and unwavering acceptance of scientific principles and laws in all their widest applications. To attempt to revive the old discredited controversies of the nineteenth century is a historical anachronism. Evolution, as I have said, is all true or it is all false. The old distinction which has so long been a fundamental assumption of theology between the supernatural, with its appendix of miracle, and the natural, from which all miracle is eliminated, is wholly obsolete so far as science is concerned, and theology can never come into real harmony with scientific methods and results until it has equally abolished this dualistic assumption. Let it be noted that science has to do only with nature and its laws. What may lie behind nature, whence its laws are derived, are questions not of science directly but of philosophy. Monism in science, therefore, does not necessarily involve monism in philosophy. If a conflict is to arise again between monism and dualism, it cannot be fought within the domain of nature and natural law, but in the metaphysical or transcen-

dental realm. In short, a man may be a dualist in his philosophy and yet accept wholly the monism of science. When Ernst Haeckel, in "The Riddle of the Universe," declares that the monism of science must be extended to all philosophical problems, he passes from scientific ground, where he is strong and invulnerable, to philosophic ground, where he at once becomes weak, and shows only too painfully "the heel of Achilles." But the new problem of theology in the aspect under which we are now considering it is directly connected with *nature and its laws*. Whatever further problems may arise in the field of philosophic thought, the problem that faces the theologian of to-day first of all is concerned with the true relation of religion and science; and here the situation has become clear, as it seems to me, to every candid observer. The new theology must first of all be a *scientific theology* through and through. When this position has once been squarely taken, it will be found that scientific and critical scholars who have been treated with distrust and unfairness, and even sometimes with scant courtesy, as if in league with destroyers of the faith, are really its most valuable friends and helpers. When nature and history are once seen to be "parts of God's ways," and full not only of divine ministries to men, but also of the truest and tenderest revelations of the divine character, what new sources of theological truth will they become! Then the Bible will become a new book, — a very well or

natural spring of the water of life. Above all, the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth will glow with a new spiritual light and beauty, drawn as they were so completely, not at second hand from human literature and learning, but directly from God's own great book of nature itself.

Let us now turn to the other aspect of the problem. Assuming that science and religion have been brought into harmonious union, and the highest forms of human intelligence thus made accordant with those religious instincts and principles which are inextinguishably rooted in every member of the human race, we are ready to ask what must be the presiding principle of a theology which shall be able to harmonize the hitherto divergent religions of the world and unite all their devotees in one kingdom of truth and life? One great barrier to this result will have been removed at once by the assumption just made. The full harmonization of religion and science must involve the entire downfall of the old traditional credal theology, on which the great missionary movements of Christendom have hitherto largely rested. With the spread of the new scientific and historical light the same result must follow in the non-Christian world, involving a like downfall of those religious and theological cults that have lived on with little relaxation of their hold on the Ethnic peoples from prehistoric times to the present day, and have resisted hitherto all the efforts of Christian missions. We have seen how vain it is to

attempt to overthrow the speculative dogmas of the Ethnic religions from the standpoint of Christian theology. The weapons of the Ethnic religious thinkers are as keen and effective as those of their opponents. The history of religion is full of these metaphysical battles; and the theological ramparts behind which these battles were fought — the most amazing metaphysical structures ever reared by man — are to-day the wonder and admiration of all students of ancient philosophy. But they belong to a mode of warfare that has passed away. To carry on the missionary movement on these old superannuated lines is no longer possible. The new missionary gospel must be one that has been transformed by the new light of our age. What the Ethnic peoples need, first of all, is the spread among them of the fullest and latest results of modern scholarship. God's newest revelations in nature and history, intelligently understood and accepted, will cause those ancient systems of religious speculation which are strong against any form of Christian dogma, to topple into a mass of ruins. Error and superstition thrive so long as men are bound in the chains of ignorance and custom, but they cannot endure the light of truth. Education and enlightenment is then the first work of the Christian missionary. But this is only the stepping-stone to his real mission as a religious teacher. When science has done its part, then historical criticism must add its quota, if he would be completely equipped for the procla-

mation of that religious truth which alone has power to convert and sanctify mankind. Such truth is to be found in Christ's original and unadulterated gospel. How this gospel was slowly distorted into another gospel until its original lineaments were mostly lost for long ages, and how it has been rediscovered for us in these last times, has been already set forth at length. Enough here to summarize and say that historical criticism has restored to Christian faith and love the true historical Jesus of Nazareth. Layer after layer of unhistorical tradition and legend, with its superstitious accretions of miracle and fable, have been removed, until at last the veritable picture of the man of Galilee in all the tenderness, and sweetness, and moral greatness of his human life has come forth to view, once more to draw to himself all tempted, hungering, and thirsting human hearts. Such a picture, with all its gospel simplicity, uttering with silent and yet eloquent lips that parable of the prodigal son, which gathered up into itself the very pith and marrow of Christ's moral teaching, has more power and virtue in it to move the world than all the theologies from Nice to Westminster. Such a simple gospel, without dogma or *credo*, without any mixture of speculative metaphysics, — a gospel from God through man to his human brother, — such a gospel of divine-human brotherly love the heart of man everywhere will open to as the morning

flowers to the rising sun, *and it will open to no other.*[1]

[1] It has been a common assumption of the advocates of Christian missions that the Ethnic religious systems have little hold upon their adherents. A close study of the history of these systems makes clear the superficial and unhistorical character of this assumption, and recent events are proving how baseless and false it is. This is especially the case with the great Asiatic religions, such as Confucianism, Hindooism, Buddhism, and Mohammedanism. As I write, items entirely independent of each other appearing in leading newspapers are straws that indicate much more truthfully than missionary reports what is the real character of the situation. First, the *Congregationalist* has the following in its editorial columns: "*Hinduism Reviving.* Hindus of the educated classes in Bengal are more actively engaged in support of their religion than ever before, and most of these have been educated in Christian schools, or in those established under the auspices of the British government. Societies are being formed for the defense of Hinduism, for studying its literature, and for practical religious and charitable work. Hindus in various ways are attempting to reform Hinduism. Some denounce idolatry, others polytheism, declaring that these superstitions are not essential to their faith." The *Christian Register* also editorially remarks: "The vast recuperative powers of the Oriental world — whether Buddhist, Mohammedan, or Confucian — have been shown through innumerable past ages, and are likely to be exhibited within our times upon a grand scale." The Boston *Transcript*, in an issue of the same week, gives some account of the results of the experiences of an English woman who was led by "her interest in the Hindoo religion and people to go to India to study Hindooism on its own ground." She spent nine years, "living entirely among the natives." On the point with which I am now concerned Miss Muller "thinks it improbable that Christianity can get any general hold on the Hindoos for a very long time to come, if ever." These items are in line with other recent testimony of men who have lived many years in India and have looked at the matter with unprejudiced minds.

What is thus made evident by the testimony of recent observation is amply sustained by the history of the Ethnic religions, which shows that the essential dogmas of those religions have been slowly built up on primary religious ideas that form the

At this point I cannot help noting how simple at last "the new problem of theology in the

very warp and woof of the Ethnic religious consciousness, and cannot be dislodged by another set of ideas without an upheaval such as is not likely to happen at present. Such changes are of all the slowest in their movement. There is something deeper and more radical in human nature and society than mere dogma or dogmatic systems of religious belief. These are but the outgrowth of sentiments and ideas that have their roots in the primary moral instincts and tendencies of human nature. While it is true that the human race is generically one, it is equally true that different varieties of mankind have developed great divergencies of religious sentiment and thought, such as ideas of the family, of woman, of government, of society, of racial kinship; and the more closely these subjects are studied, the more clearly will it be seen that religious dogmatic systems are secondary to these primary ideas, and are built up to support them. Here, in part at least, is the explanation of the remarkable and apparently deep-seated difference between the Asiatic Oriental mind and character and that of the Occidental or European. This difference lies below the dogmatic differences between the Ethnic and Christian religions, and it is the chief bar to the success of Christian missions. It may be said that Christianity is itself of Asiatic origin. This is true, but its speedy amalgamation with Greek ideas completely changed its whole character, as has been shown. A Semitic Asiatic religion became a Hellenized European religion, and it has remained such to this day. The Semitic Judaism out of which it sprang has always refused to accept it. This is the historical reason why Christianity in its early progress never penetrated far beyond the outskirts of the Roman Empire. The subsequent conversion of the western barbarians was more due to the influence of Roman civilization and culture, in connection with race affinity, than to the dogmas of the Christian religion. Thus it may be seen that the problem of the Christianization of the world is a far more complex and intricate one than is ordinarily supposed. It is my profound conviction, as a historical student, that the Christian nations providentially hold the keys of the world's religious as well as political future; but everything depends, as I have endeavored to show, on the way in which Christianity employs its forces.

twentieth century" has become. In this volume we have walked around and closely scanned grand scholastic metaphysical systems, the Hindoo, the Plotinian, the Christian, rising toward the sky like the vast mediæval cathedrals; but even now they are growing dim in the distance behind us, as we turn the corner of a new century, while before us rises the unobtrusive figure of a man, the meek and lowly Jesus, who "had not where to lay his head." Humbling, indeed, is such a shrinkage of human philosophy to human pride. Not so strange would it be if again, as in the beginnings of Christianity, Christ in his lowliness should be "despised and rejected" even by the religious leaders of Christendom, unwilling to leave those mediæval structures on which they have labored so long for the humble abode of Nazareth. Fortunate the Christian missionary who shall have so caught the spirit of his master that he will be ready to lay aside all the pride of human philosophy, as Paul did, and preach "Jesus Christ and him crucified," that is, Christ's own gospel of love and sacrifice.

The new problem of theology once fairly grasped, the construction will be easy. I had almost said that it will construct itself. Founded

No earnest student of the great Oriental religions can, in my judgment, be made to believe that they will ever be overthrown by philosophical or theological dogmas of any kind. But, as I have said, there is a more excellent way, and it is the only way, — the way of a nobler civilization, a truer science, a diviner gospel of love and charity.

on the inductive method, its development will be natural and spontaneous. As science and historical criticism move on to new fields of discovery and knowledge, theology will follow, appropriating all the new truth for the satisfaction of its intellectual and spiritual needs. As "knowledge grows from more to more," religion and the religious nature will rise to higher and fuller conceptions of truth.

It is not difficult also to forecast what the essential feature of the new theology will be. Man and nature together will constitute its fundamental material, and as man is nature's crown, he will naturally be the foremost subject of religious interest. Besides, man's own moral consciousness is the focus-point through which all the moral light of the universe in every form of revelation must pass. The seat of moral authority for every man is in his own moral nature. It becomes, therefore, the highest moral duty of every man to study himself, and in the light of that psychological survey to test and gauge his moral responsibility. All the spiritual knowledge of which man is capable must reach him through his own moral faculties, so that its real character will be truly discoverable only as it takes on the forms of the moral consciousness. God can be known only as his image is shadowed in man's own moral nature. Whether God and man are of one common image and likeness or not, man cannot help conceiving of God in that way. If God is not a moral and personal

being, he is to man "an unknown God." Hence theology is destined to be essentially *an anthropology;* and psychology or the study of man's higher nature will form with natural science the twin "master lights" of theological truth, — historical criticism assisting them by its methods of eliminating possible error and by shedding the further light of universal human experience upon man's individual path.

Another historical forecast may also be taken. Not only will the development of the new theology be easy, it will also be rapid. Historical movements as a rule are slow; but crises often involve immense changes that are accomplished with a marvelous celerity. Such, I believe, will be the case in the religious and theological advances of the new century. Even now one can feel the rushing of the tide beneath his feet. Cause and effect go together. One has only to study the causes of the present religious and theological unrest, and see how deep and radical they are, to lose all sense of surprise at the great changes that are coming over human thought and especially over all the old forms of religious belief. This movement is still in its very birth throes. The new currents are only just beginning to set toward their swift forward march. Science is still "mewing its mighty youth," and historical criticism is but a child in swaddling clothes. What vast accessions to the realm of knowledge may we not expect when these striplings attain to their full

majority! The infant is already born, so the historical observer may not fear to say, who will see with his own eyes an era of scientific and historical progress that shall make our present achievements seem like the play of children; and with it a new philosophy of nature, of man, and of God, — in brief, a new world, a new religion, and a new theology practically complete.

But some one metaphysically inclined, and not quite ready to accept such a simple solution as the inductive historical method offers, may skeptically raise the question: what about *monism versus dualism?* To which my reply would be: For such a riddle I have no answer. Ask, if you will, the sphinxes that line the approach to the ruined temple of Egyptian Karnak, whose speechless lips and far-off looking eyes are silent witnesses to the eternal mystery of life and time. For myself, I have little faith in metaphysical speculation as containing any satisfactory solution of religious problems or even as able to throw any practical light upon them. Not till Kant had passed from the barren wastes of speculative rationalistic criticism to the green pastures of man's moral intuitions did his religious consciousness find rest. "The true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world" was kindled by God in every man's moral nature. By itself the speculative or ratiocinating faculty, whether analytical or synthetical, is but a dry Sahara waste. It has no fountain of spiritual life.

Man's moral consciousness is the natural headspring of all religion and of all religious truth. That consciousness can be interrogated and studied only by the inductive or experimental method. Therefore scientific and historical induction affords the only basis of a true theology. It has been made a point of criticism against "The Evolution of Trinitarism" that it declares the moral consciousness to be in its very nature theistic, — it being assumed by these critics that such a declaration is *a priori* or deductive rather than inductive. Such an assumption I decline to accept, and assert, on the contrary, that all the religious light we have from our moral consciousness is purely the result of experience, and that such experience can be studied only by experimental induction ; and further, that the widest possible survey of the moral history of mankind proves conclusively that man's moral instincts and intuitions are theistic, and not pantheistic. If my position be valid, the charge of logical inconsistency falls to the ground.

Let me here say that the difference between these two modes of procedure in the discovery of religious truth is vital. The true *fons et origo* of the *a priori* or abstract method, with all its metaphysical assumptions, is the speculative faculty, — a method of religious quest and adventure as unsafe as Bellerophon's horse Pegasus, who threw his rider to the earth when he wished to be carried to heaven. This faculty has its function in critical philosophy, but it should be a servant, and never

become a master. If one would realize what mastership involves, he has only to read the history of Christian theology. On the other hand, the true and original home of religion and of religious truth is man's religious nature. Strange that so easy a lesson should be so hard to remember. No doubt the world will have its *a priori's* and speculative idealisms to the end of time. There are always some to whom a veritable abstraction or Platonic "idea" is "daily food." Unfortunately for such the twentieth century is otherwise inclined. The *Zeitgeist* has worked too hard to get rid of the metaphysical cobwebs of past millenniums and to set its house in order for the new facts of science and history, to listen credulously or patiently to any metaphysical siren song. The new theology, whatever else it may be, will be a *matter of fact*, a *moral*, an *anthropologic* theology, and will be solidly built on the foundation stones of the truths revealed through man's moral consciousness. Here will be the field of investigation, — a field of religious inquiry virgin and rich indeed, hitherto almost covered up by the old theological dogmas of "original sin" and "total depravity." How could Jonathan Edwards understand the religious nature of a child, when he piously believed that from birth it was "a little viper" steeped in the "poison" of sin! Were I asked what religious book I regard as the most epochal of the last century in New England or even in America I should answer

at once: Bushnell's "Christian Nurture." This book, first published in 1860, — the year following, be it noted, the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species," — has exerted a quiet but truly remarkable influence. If ever a man "builded better than he knew," it was Bushnell. Scarcely realizing what he was doing, Bushnell practically laid the first stone in the foundations of the new theology. That stone was the new position taken that the Christian religion is a matter of natural growth and nurture in man, beginning with the earliest years of childhood. The whole book is a fervid plea for the careful Christian education and training of children from the beginnings of moral existence. When it was published, the times were ripe for the seed sown. The Edwardsian Calvinistic doctrine of child-nature as poisoned and depraved by the Adamic sin was losing its hold on the age, partly through the prevalence of Hopkinsianism which denied natural corruption, though putting something just as bad in its place, but more through the scientific and critical light that was slowly permeating the minds of men. To this day I know of no theological work so full of the new religious leaven and spirit that are working in our time as Bushnell's "Christian Nurture;" and its main teaching concerning the child-nature will, I believe, be the most fruitful feature of those psychological investigations which more than all other influences combined will give a new shaping to theological thought. The new theology

will not only be anthropological: it will be a *child-anthropology*, and Milton's lines —

> "The childhood shows the man
> As morning shows the day" —

will be the first article of its *credo*.

Realizing thus how simple and rapid the theological movement of the twentieth century is likely to be, I am ready to believe that the necessary preliminary work of destructive criticism may soon give way to a new theological construction. It is true that theological changes are usually of creeping pace, especially when thought has become stiffened into creeds. Who does not realize it that has studied the history of theological beliefs? How often does the Scripture adage come to mind, with ever growing impressiveness, "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years"! The movement of the dogmatic evolutions of the great world religions has been like the geological formation of the crust of the earth. The Ethnic trinities antedate all history, and one may follow them until they are lost in the prehistoric origins of the race. Through what long ages may the growth of Christian theology be traced! As a rule how unyielding and tenacious of its hold on Christian faith has every dogma been! Yet, on the other hand, it has been proved equally true that "a thousand years with the Lord are as one day." Long deferred was the great Protestant Reformation that broke for half of Europe the papal yoke; but when the crisis at last came, a single genera-

tion sufficed to accomplish the most remarkable ecclesiastical revolt in history. The signs of an equally remarkable theological revolution fill the religious sky to-day and give no uncertain note of warning that "*The time is short.*"

I cannot finish this book without touching once more the note which was struck in the last chapter of my previous volume. If the historical evolution of nineteen centuries gave grounds for optimistic hopefulness, how much more occasion for a like sentiment at the conclusion of a survey of man's religious history from the beginning of time! How infinitely great the contrast between the moral ignorance and blindness of mankind at the outset of their moral life and our clear and intelligent grasp of religious truth to-day! What makes this contrast the more signal is the fact that in our own generation not only has the true history of nature and man been made known, but also the scientific and historical laws in accordance with which it is guided and will continue to be guided in the future. Here the basis is laid as it was never laid before for confidence and faith. To a degree at least we now know where we are in God's universe and whither we are tending. "God hath spoken to us at the end of these days," by the things that are made, in a manner that cannot be mistaken, and shown that "he is not far from any one of us." Nature, as its laws have proved, is good, not evil, and the God of nature must be good also. Divine revelation, to earlier faith so mysterious,

transcendent, and sporadic, has become natural and immanent and harmonious with the faculties of our moral nature. We wait no longer to hear God speak outside of us in some miraculous way, but listen continually to "the still small voice" that whispers within our own souls. With the new light of our scientific day the old materialism, with all its degrading and cruel superstitions, has faded into shadows that have gone with the night. Religion with us is no longer of the letter or of the form, but of the spirit. Dogma is but the cast-off badge of a slavery that has given place to "the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free." Even those fads of religious fancy and custom that human nature delights in at certain stages and in certain moods are dropping off as "childish things." The educated world has at last entered into the inheritance of its full manhood. As it looks backward it sees the difficult and uncertain path by which it has slowly gained its present point of vision, and turning to the future rejoices in that eternal sweep of unchanging divine law which gives such sweet assurance that all things shall continue "as they were from the beginning," only revealing themselves more and more clearly in all their rhythmic order and grace, —

> "Forever singing as they shine,
> The hand that made us is divine."

Coming back from such an outlook to the little round of our mortal lives, with their vicissitudes of

sorrow and joy, loss and gain, good and evil, how can we forget the truth thus learned, that the whole universe in which we live, with all its laws and forces and historical evolutions, declares in one majestic and harmonious accord that "God is good"? It was with a vision not quite cleared from the clouds of old tradition, but with eager gaze into the growing revelations which nature and history had already disclosed, that Tennyson summed up in his "In Memoriam" the half doubting, half believing attitude of the century just ended: —

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

"That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.

"Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

"So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry."

Such a strain, with all its longing after faith, and with its frank confession of agnosticism and doubt, reminds one of the melancholy notes of Virgil's Æneid. Tennyson's "trust" after all is but a "dream," and his expression of it but an

"infant's cry." It is "night" still around him. "The light," for which he prays has not yet risen.[1] I can but think that the future Tennyson or Virgil of our twentieth century will strike a more hopeful key and sing a nobler song. Browning was only a younger contemporary of Tennyson, but he had caught something of the spirit of the coming age when he wrote that simple yet weird poem, "The Boy and the Angel," from which I quote: —

> "Morning, evening, noon and night,
> 'Praise God!' sang Theocrite.
>
> "Hard he labored, long and well;
> O'er his work the boy's curls fell.
>
> "But ever, at each period,
> He stopped and sang, 'Praise God!'
>
> "Then back again his curls he threw,
> And cheerful turned to work anew.
>
> "He did God's will; to him, all one
> If on the earth or in the sun.

[1] It may be said that the "In Memoriam" does not fairly represent Tennyson's maturer religious views. Allowing this, it remains true that this poem, with all its agnostic and hesitating religious temper, accurately represents the ruling literary spirit of the nineteenth century; and it may be added that the "In Memoriam" influenced religiously the age more than all Tennyson's other writings. Nor does it stand alone among these writings in its religious character. The same note of doubt, uncertainty, and unrest is even more strongly struck in "The Two Voices." No doubt, as Tennyson drew nearer to the end of the century, the spirit of unquestioning faith grew on him, and there are clear touches of it in some of his last poems. But if the "In Memoriam" was the supreme poetical creation of the Victorian age, no less was it the supreme expression of its religious moods.

> "God said, 'A praise is in mine ear;
> There is no doubt in it, no fear!'"

Who does not note the difference in the religious temper of these two poets? The "In Memoriam" is pensive with a minor strain of baffled moral effort and anxious uncertainty that vibrates all through the poem like a chilling east wind. But Browning has somehow seen a new light — the light of a new scientific and historical day.

> "God said, 'A *praise* is in mine ear;
> There is *no doubt in it, no fear!*'"

will be the deep undertone and refrain of man's coming religion, — not so much a new religion as a revival of Christ's own religion, simple, spiritual, filled with a sense of God's presence and reflecting his gracious spirit of love. This new age of ours is the heir of two centuries. The eighteenth century was marked by an intense skeptical reaction from a theology of gloom and fear. The nineteenth century was an age of conflict between traditional dogmas that were embalmed in creeds and the moral awakening caused by the new revelations of science and history. The twentieth century will be an era of faith built on solid grounds, and of religious freedom and peace.

Into that new era our survey cannot further carry us. The scroll of God's providence unrolls only as time moves on. But this we know, that faith, freedom, and peace are always the harbingers of the highest blessings to man, and of the fullest revelations of God. Political peace, with its ac-

companiment of freedom, has ever been the world's ideal. Men have fought, bled, and died for it. "Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem" is still written on the escutcheon of the State of Massachusetts, and fitly symbolizes the Puritan spirit. But political peace is only a crude prefigurement of moral and spiritual peace and harmony. Towards this the noblest souls of the race have always striven. "Peace I leave with you" was Christ's last message to his sorrowing companions. It is in such an atmosphere that man receives the clearest and purest inspirations. Only after the storm on the Galilean lake had subsided, and the tumult in the hearts of Christ's disciples had been stilled, did they gain a new apprehension of his marvelous nature and exclaim: "What manner of man is this?" Not in times of "*Sturm und Drang*" are the highest heavens opened. Wordsworth had caught the true secret of the "open vision" in the strangely mystical lines: —

> "Hence in a season of calm weather
> Though inland far we be,
> Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither,
> Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the children sport upon the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

INDEX

Abbott, Lyman, criticism of "Evolution of Trinitarianism," 213; objects to my view of Paul's mediational theology, 213; declares that I make Paul an Arian, 213; real point of objection to my interpretation, 215; his dislike of the mediation doctrine, 216; thinks I misunderstand Paul, 216; my view of evolution of Trinitarianism "fatally defective," 218; "fatal defect" of Dr. Abbott's whole criticism, 218; admits the laws of nature to be inviolable with a single exception, 347.

"American Journal of Theology," article, 183.

Amiel, H. F., quoted, 199.

Apostles' Creed, title legendary, 232; not earlier in original form than third century, 233; reached its present shape in eighth century as a Latin creed of Western Church, 235.

Aristotle, passage from *De Cælo*, 16; not a trinitarian, 18; threefold law of the syllogism, 18; Nicomachean Ethics, 309; corrected ethical vacillation of Plato, 310.

Athenagoras held Holy Spirit to be an effluence (not personal) from God, 241.

Athene, mediator between gods and men, 108; central figure of Odyssey, 108; analysis of action of Odyssey, 108; various incarnations, 109; intercessor for men, 108; mediating character, 110; "in fashion as a man," 112; motherly character, 113; compared with Mary, mother of Jesus, 114; "called virgin," 114.

Augustine, use of tripartite character of soul in work on Trinity, 18; *Contra Mendacium*, 312.

Babylonian epic of creation, 221.

Bacon, B. W., article in "Biblical World," 218; on the Fourth Gospel, quoted, 263.

Baptism, originally "into Christ," 230; evolution of trinitarian formula, 231, 232.

Barnabas, epistle of, 228.

Bertrand, A., *La Religion des Gaulois*, 102, note.

Bhagavatgita (*Divine Song*), 54, 123.

Brahm, absolute form of personal Brahma, 43.

Browning, R., "The Boy and the Angel," quoted, 367; compared with Tennyson, 368.

Buddha (Gautama), 39; character of teaching, 40; collection of reputed sayings, 40; comparison with Christ's sayings, 41; lives of B. mostly legendary; likeness to gospel accounts of Christ, 42; temptation by the Evil One, 42; relation of Buddhist and Christian traditions, 42; B. in later Hindoo tradition an incarnation of Vishnu.

Buddhism, 39; not a dogmatic revolt from earlier Hindoo ideas, 57; its dogma of an incarnation of God the only historical counterpart to that of Christianity, 58; tolerant character, 275.

Bushnell, H., "Christian Nurture," most epochal book of last century in America, 362; doctrine of child nurture fruitful in psychological investigations, 362.

Capitoline temple, 118.

Carey, Professor, "Synoptic Gospels," quoted, 223.

Christian angelology and demonology, 276; radically similar to Ethnic

ideas, 276; essentially polytheistic in Middle Ages, 278.
"Christian Register," quoted, 354, note.
Christian religion, no more "historical" than Ethnic religions, 194, 197; comes under the strict law of historical evolution, 198; traditional view of, as the one divine gospel, 199; entrance into Greek world begins a new chapter of history, 210; its philosophy radically changed, 211; Paul and early Fathers influenced by Greek thought, 211; close historical connection between Christian and Ethnic religions, 212; intolerant as compared with Ethnic religions, 275.
Christian theology essentially a Christology, 220.
Christianity, as a world-religion, 281; religion and the religious instinct in men essentially one, 282; God, one, 282; world-religion finally one, 283; not an external unity, 283; creeds and dogmas barriers to unity, 283; comparative ineffectualness of Christian missions, 285; necessity of revival of Christ's original gospel, 286; its ruling force, 286; crisis in history of, 291; how made ready for its work, 293; causes of unreadiness, 293; gradual shifting of religious leadership, 297; exposed to dangers within and without, 298; as organized, exposed to two perils, 298; churches wedded to forms of religious truth out of joint with our times, 301; campaign of education imperatively needed, 302; proper teaching of the young, 302; false reliance on perpetuity of organized church, 303; no institution can live simply on its past, 305; peculiar character of religious insincerity, 306; sincerity of Christ, 306; ethics of Plato and Aristotle, 307; influence on church, 309; "*officiosum mendacium*," 309; Old Testament ethical teaching, 310; effect on ethics of the theory of "double sense" in Scripture, 311; lawful use of dissimulation against heretics, 311; Augustine's "*contra mendacium*," 312; ethics of "*officiosum mendacium*" continued after Protestant revolt, 314; inherited virus of insincerity in the church to-day, 315; Aristotle on dissimulation, 319; sin of *suppressio veri*, 320; modern Biblical exegesis, 320; "I go *not* up to this feast," 321; change of οὐκ to οὔπω, 321; Jerome, quoted, 321; charges of Porphyry, 322; Jerome's defense, 322; Lardner, N., quoted, 324; Alford's exegesis, 325; explanation of Alford's extraordinary interpretation, 327; fatal flaw, 328; effect of new light on Johannine problem, 329; Tholuck's exegesis, 330; Bishop Ellicott rejects previous interpretations, 331; his own, an amazing "wresting of Scripture," 333; results of theory of "*officiosum mendacium*," 334; reaction through new spirit of the age, 335; Christianity like an old palimpsest, 336; the apocalypse, its interpretation, 338.
Clement, epistle of, 227.
Comforter (Paraclete), not mentioned by Justin Martyr, 240; Irenæus first to mention it, and quote from Fourth Gospel, 241; of Greek origin, traceable to Philo, 262; doctrine of, not taught in the synoptics, 263.
"Congregationalist," quoted, 354, note.
Constantine, devoted to worship of sun-god, 25.
Cross, sign of the, 94; origin, prehistoric, 94; found in all parts of the world, 96; not original with Christianity, 96; pre-Christian, different in significance from Christian, 97, 99; early form, 97; Latin form, later, 97; made by Constantine the great symbol of Christianity, 99; gradual blending of pre-Christian and Christian conceptions, 100; illustrated from early Christian art, 100; history of: *La Religion des Gaulois*, Bertrand, 102, note.
Crucifix, origin as late as seventh century, 97.

Dark Ages, religion of, one of credulity, fear, and cruelty, 279.

Darmesteter, J., Avestan scholar, quoted, 67.
Darwin, Charles, "Origin of Species" (Oct. 1, 1859), 292.
Defoe, 20.

Emmons, N., quoted, 252.
Ethnic religions, traditional view of, as essentially evil and false, result of historical ignorance, 182; Paul's indictment against, equally applicable to a degenerate Christianity, 182; upward progress of, 183.
Evolution, physical *versus* historical, 4; illustrated in the history of religions, 5. Christianity no exception, 5; law of, historical, universal, and without break, 191.
"Evolution of Trinitarianism" criticised, 216–218, 360.

Fairbairn, A. M., 19.
Family, the, root of trinitarian idea, 22.
Father, origin of term as applied to God, 23.
Feminine element in Trinity, absence of, in Christian dogma, 253; Mary, a true human mother, 253; substitution of Holy Spirit for Mary, 254; in "Gospel of the Hebrews" the Holy Spirit is called Christ's mother, 255; why the feminine element failed to prevail, 255; loss felt in Christian consciousness, 256.
Fergusson, J., "History of Architecture," plan of triple Etruscan temple, 118.
Fourth Gospel, first gives theory of Comforter and procession from the Father, 281; Athanasius rested defense of *homoousian* trinity primarily on, 262; historicity of, 262; whether the words imputed to Christ concerning Comforter were spoken by him, 262. (For writer's judgment on authenticity of, see Appendix A on "The Johannine Problem," in "Evolution of Trinitarianism," 264.)

Gathas, oldest Avestan writing, 68; picture of Zoroaster, 68; evolution of supernatural and miraculous elements, 68; remarkable resemblances to events in life of Christ, 68.
Generation, eternal, developed by Plotinus, emphasized by Origen and Athanasius, 252.
Generation idea, behind divine triads, 22; fundamental to all Ethnic trinities, and to Christian dogma, 251.
Gibbon, E., quoted, 90.
Gnosticism, Zoroastrian in origin, 77, 88.
God, the earliest conception of, 33; can exist only in trinity, so held by Plotinus and present day theologians, 249.
Greek religion, originally polytheistic, 92; earlier philosophy of, 124; new epoch of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, 124.

Haeckel, Ernst, "The Riddle of the Universe," 350.
"Hebrews, Gospel of," early gospel, mostly lost, 255; quoted, 255.
Heartley, C. A., *Harmonia Symbolica*, 235.
Holy Spirit, evolution of, as third Person of Trinity, 222; in Old Testament always adjunctive or adjectival, setting forth the divine activity, 222; Christ's doctrine of, 223; Paul, Jewish monotheist, 224; used the term as synonymous with God, 224; illustrated tendency towards personality, 225; doxologies, to God only, 226; view of post-Apostolic Fathers, 226; tendencies towards evolution of H. S., as third person, along three lines of movement, 235; Justin Martyr, wavering "view of," 239; question whether H. S. is a member of Trinity or creature not settled until Nicene age, 240; Origen and Arius held that H. S. had a beginning in time, 240; procession of, in Christian trinity, 253; doctrine of H. S. as third person, a sort of historical necessity, 254; "procession" does not appear in creeds until fourth century, 261; why *procession* of third person instead of *generation*, 261; found in Fourth Gospel, 361; real meaning of procession, 265.

Homer, use of, prohibited by Plato in scheme of education, 92.
Huss, John, violation of safe conduct by Council of Constance, 313.

Ignatian Epistles, seven longer, largely interpolated, 236; seven shorter, fewer interpolations, 236; not to be accepted as genuine, 236; results of comparison of two versions, 236, 237; "Comforter" and "Word" found in longer, but not in shorter, 238; conclusive testimony to fluxive character of early trinitarianism, 238.
Iliad, its trinity, 103; subordinationism, 105; mediational character of Athene, 105.
Illingworth, J. K., quoted, 195; treats Christian dogmas as historical facts, 196.
Incarnation, two classes of theory of, 51; distinction between incarnation and mediation theories, 52; stages of evolution of dogma, 71.
Inge, W. R., holds that Plotinus was not a pantheist, 183; apparent misunderstanding of phrase "sameness and otherness," 184; view savors of Sabellianism, 185; extracts from the Enneads that prove Plotinus a pantheist, 185; misunderstanding of term ἕκαστος, 186; says "Plotinus is no Buddhist," 188.
Irenæus, first to give a creed on trinitarian basis, 241; introduces *third* stage of evolution of trinity, 242; marked by use of Fourth Gospel, and doctrine of Comforter, 242.
"Isis and Osiris," attributed to Plutarch, genuineness somewhat doubtful, 137.

Jesus Christ, had no mediation doctrine, 60; a truly historical personage, 192; legends of miraculous birth common to all religious epochs and characters, 193; such legends misgrowths of a credulous and uncritical age, 194; J. C., not the author of new dogmas, 201; or of a new philosophy, 202; or of a new system of ethics, 203; new "moral consciousness" of character of God and of man's relation to Him, 205; love, the substance of religion, 205; gospel originally given in Hebrew-Aramaic, 206; divinizing of J. C., the historical starting point of Christian trinity, 270; and the theological centre of Christianity, 271; fallacy of apology concerning C. as historical person, 272; most honored when truth told of him, 279.
Jupiter Capitolinus, 118.

Kant, E., quoted, 319.
Krishna, incarnation of Vishnu, 47; pre-Christian, 50; differences between it and the Christian dogma, 50.

Lectisternium, 118.
Lightfoot, Bishop, on Ignatian Epistles, 236.
Λόγος (logos), unfortunate error of Latin version of N. T., perpetuated in English versions, 128; meaning of, in proem of Fourth Gospel, 129; introduced by Heracleitus into philosophical language, 129; Plato's use of, 129; how logos doctrine is traced to Plato, 130; Philo's substitution of λόγος for ψυχή as mediation principle, 131; logos of Fourth Gospel, 132.
Lonsdale and Lee, translators of Æneid, quoted, 121.

Maha-Bharata, 43.
Marduk, "first-born," "only begotten," "son of Ea," 25.
Mary, Virgin, doctrine and cultus of, not peculiar to Christianity, 71; mother of Jesus, 114; raised in Catholic theology to divine rank, as mediator, 114; represents the feminine element in mediation, 114; "Queen of Heaven," 116; process of evolution of dogma of, 252; popularity of cult of, in the Middle Ages, 257; Catholic effort to place M. in the Trinity, 258; at Christ's side in paintings, 258; cult of M. growing among Protestants, 259; how defensible, 260; only possible direct witness of virginity, 263.
McCosh, J., "The Supernatural in re-

lation to the Natural," 346; represents the traditional pre-Darwinian view of nature and miracle, 346; accepts full historicity of Scripture miracles, 347; holds that the laws of nature may admit of exceptions, 347; with Dr. L. Abbott, who admits a single exception, viz., the miraculous birth of Christ, 348.
Mediation idea, how it led to a trinity, 28; tended to union with generation idea, 28; difference between Mithraic and Christian, 85.
Mediator, origin of idea of, 26; in the Ethnic trinities, 27; in Plato, 27; in Vedic hymn to Agni, 27; Sosioch as Zoroastrian, 79; μεσίτης (mediator) introduced by Philo into Greek philosophy, 131; made the keynote of Paul's Christology, 132; also of Epistle to Hebrews, 132.
Michelet, French historian, in *Bible de l'Humanité* expresses preference for dualism, 89.
Mill, James, view of dualism as theory of universe, 89.
Mills, L. H., quoted, 65.
Mithra, sun-god in Vedas, 81; in Avesta, creature of Ormuzd, 81; in later Zoroastrianism, the great mediator, 81; Mithraic triad, 82; spread of Mithraic cult in Roman world, 82; takes place of Ormuzd as head of Zoroastrian trinity, 84; temples of, closed by Theodosius, 89; Mithraic cult, overthrown by Christian emperors, 89, 90; to be condemned, 91.
Mohammedanism, had a mediation element, 60; half-brother to Christianity, 275.
Monotheism, as the primitive revelation, 7; of Genesis as reformed version of older polytheism, 78.
Moses, a "mediator," but not deified, 59.
Mythology, essentially a system of symbolism, 102; product of imagination, 102; comparison of Greek with other forms of, 103.

New Platonism, begins with Philo and Plutarch, 136; test words; idealism, mediation, evolution, 136; change from Platonism radical, 136.
Nimbus, or aureole, sign of saintliness or divinity, 101; connection with sign of cross, 101.
Numbers, sacredness of, 15; special sacredness of seven and three, 16; Pythagorean idea of the propitious character of *odd* numbers, 16.
Numenius, midway between Plutarch and Plotinus, 148; "three gods," 148; follower of Plato, 148; significance of, 149; generation doctrine applied to whole trinity, 150; the world, a member of trinity, 150.

Odyssey, of later date than Iliad, 105; Athene supplants Here, 105; Apollo becomes member of trinity, 106; mediating function joined to second person, 106; Odyssey compared with Iliad, 106; its theme, 107; chief characters, 107; Athene the central personage, 108; O. unrivalled in Ethnic literature, 112; second person of trinity a woman, 113; O. compared with Æneid, 122; "Divine Song" of Ethnic Bible, 123.
Old Testament, ethical teaching of, 310.
Origen, theory of mediatorship between God and Satan, 86, 88; O. laid foundation of completed dogma of Holy Spirit as third person, 242; regarded H. S. as a creature, 243; a monotheistic trinitarian, 243.

Pantheon, pagan temple, dedicated to "Mary and all the saints," 278.
Paul, Greek training of, 207; founder of Græco-Roman Christianity, 208; instrument of transfer of Christianity from Semitic to Aryan world, 209; mediation doctrine of, defended against view of Dr. Lyman Abbott, 213; not an Arian, 214; did not make Christ identical with God, 214.
Paulsen, "System of Ethics," quoted, 319.
Penelope, painting of, at Pompeii, 107.
Persian religion, relation to Indian, 64.

Petrie, Flinders, quoted, 210.
Philo, agency in developing Logos doctrine, 130; historical founder of logos mediation theology, 131; introduced the term μεσίτης (mediator), 131; not a trinitarian, 132; his "mediator" not a strict person, 133.
Plato, called God, Father, 24; quoted, 62; idealistic dualist, 125; mediation doctrine, 126; three principles of being, 126; how the phenomenal world is produced, 126; basis of trinitarian development, 127; germ of Logos doctrine, 128; eliminated fabulous materials from philosophy, 134; trinitarian germs, 166; ethical views, 307; opposed use of Homer in education, 307; "lie in words" sometimes necessary, 308; influence of, on Christian morals, 309.
Pliny, Elder, quoted, 16.
Plotinus, historical connection with Numenius, 152; differences between them, 152; influence of Plato and Aristotle, 153; philosophical system essentially original, 154; Plotinian trinity alone the work of a single religious genius, 154; built a metaphysical trinity on Platonic foundations, 155; trinity has no mythological background, wholly transcendental, no divine incarnation, 156; originality of genius, 157; a man of faith, 157; unique power as a thinker, 157; aim practical and religious, 159; analysis of famous chapter, V. 1, in the Enneads, 160; souls immortal, and descended from metaphysical world, 160, 161; assumes idealistic dualism, 161; "Sameness and Otherness," Plato's dualistic key, adopted, 164; full evolution of a trinity, 168; peculiar double character of third hypostasis, 172; eternal generation of trinity, 173; subordination of second and third hypostases, 173; soul *homoousios* with God, 174; opposes Gnostics, 174; limits trinitarian evolution to *three*, 175; three hypostases not personal beings, 176; "otherness" the bridge from transcendent to material world, 177; moral power of, 178.
Plutarch, quoted, 16; styles the gods "saviours," 74; a Platonist, 135; ruling feature of his system, mediation, prepared way for Plotinus, 134; monistic rather than dualistic, 136; new philosophic key, evolution, 136; a philosophical eclectic, 138; found in the Egyptian Osiris myth, a philosophic trinity, 138; seeks to bring Plato's three principles of existence into harmony with the Egyptian triad, Osiris, Isis, and Horus, 142; affinity not real, 143; opened the path from theism to pantheism, 144; two steps towards it, 145; led the way to the trinity of Numenius, 148.
Polycarp, Epistle of, 228.
Polytheism, traditional view of its origin, 7; Paul most influential expounder, 8; historical view of origin, 8.
Porphyry, letter to Marcella, 180.
Pythagoras, held in great repute by Greek Fathers, 248.

Rawlinson, G., on Egyptian trinities, 15.
Reconstruction, in theology, 341.
Renan, E., quoted, 90, 258.
Revelation, book of, Zoroastrian elements, 76.
Réville, Albert, *Histoire du dogme de la divinité de Jésus Christ*, quoted, 258.
Réville, Jean, *La Religion sous les Severes*, quoted, 88.
Roman religion, appendix to Greek, 116; abstract character, 117; trinity, 117; Capitoline trinity, of Etruscan origin, 110; comparison of R. trinity with Greek, 119.

Sanday, Professor, suggestion concerning origin of Apostles' Creed, 232.
Satan, Ahriman of Avesta, 77; development of doctrine of, in the church, 86; Origen's doctrine of, drawn indirectly from Zoroastrianism, 86.
Sayce, Professor, quoted, 23.
Schaff, P., 21; quoted on Apostles' Creed, 234.

Seneca, quoted, 61; "Letters of Paul and Seneca," spurious, 61.
Servius, commentator on Virgil, quoted, 118.
Shedd, W. G. T., 19.
Smith, H. B., quoted, 10.
Sosiosh, Zoroastrian "saviour," 73; mythical being, 74; supernatural son of Zoroaster, 74; divine messenger of Ormuzd to raise the dead and judge the world, 75.
Strauss, D. F., quoted, 342.
Symbolism, fundamental in human thought and language, 94.
Symbols, of cross, 94; of sun, 95; their religious character, 96; found in all parts of world, 96; of cross and wheel, 98; original significance, 98, 99.
Swastica, Hindoo gammated cross, 98.

Talmud, quoted, 224.
Tauribolium, rite of Mithraic worship, 83.
"Teaching of Twelve Apostles," 229; illustrates inchoate character of trinitarian idea, 231; no trace of Pauline mediatorship, 231; Christ the "servant of God," 231; doxologies monotheistic, 231: baptismal formula, first in trinitarian form, 231.
Tennyson, Alfred, quoted, 62, 366; compared with Browning, 368.
"Tetractys," Pythagorean term, usual form of oath, 246.
Theology, the new problem of, 340; two sides or aspects, 341; contrast with problem of nineteenth century, 342; "Origin of Species," 343; mortal conflict betweeen law of uninterrupted evolution and the traditional principle of supernatural intervention by special creation and miracle, 343; victory of science and historical criticism, 344, 345; the new problem, the complete harmonizing of scientific, historical and religious truth, 344; downfall of old theology, 344; the new, must be scientific, 350; other aspect of problem, 351; effect of harmonizing of science and religion on missionary movement, 351; false assumption that Ethnic religious systems are effete, 354, note; problem of Christianization of world more complex than ordinarily supposed, 355, note; great Oriental religions cannot be overthrown by theological dogmas, 356; construction of new theology simple and easy, 355, 366; essential feature, *anthropological*, 357; development rapid, 358; monism *versus* dualism, 359; new theology not metaphysical but moral, 360, 361; effect of Bushnell's "Christian Nurture," 362; grounds for optimistic hopefulness, 364; Tennyson as representative of religious temper of nineteenth century, 366; Browning, of the twentieth, 367; faith, freedom and peace, watchwords of the future, 368.
Theophilus, makes "wisdom" third person in place of H. S., 241.
Three, the complete or perfect number, according to Aristotle, 16.
"Transcript," Boston, quoted, 354, note.
Triad, a principle of nature according to Aristotle, 17.
Triadal idea, 244; how it entered into Christian theology, 248.
Triads, widely spread over the world, 7; relation to Pantheism, 11.
Trimurti, Hindoo, 43; history of its evolution, 43–45.
Trinitarianism, its origin, 9; a halfway house from polytheism to the doctrine of the divine unity, 10; Zoroastrian, why comparatively incomplete, 78.
Trinities, Ethnic, comparatively late in development, 12; historical origin unknown, 14; result of a long evolution, 14; why trinity rather than duad or quaternity, 14; explanation of rise of, 22; stage toward pantheism, 29; of diverse and independent origin, 32; result from common religious instincts and needs of human nature, 32; subject to various evolutionary changes, 35; persistency of trinitarian idea, 36; Ethnic and Christian, alike under the common law of historical evo-

lution, 219, 243; comparison of internal characteristics, 243; internal resemblances, 250; mediation element, the closest bond, 266; mediational terms characterize Ethnic trinities as the Christian dogma, 267; French critic quoted, 268; internal differences, 270; inflexibility of Christian dogma due to external rather than internal causes, 274; resemblances radical, differences superficial, 279.

Trinity, Christian dogma of, supposed to be part of original revelation in Genesis, 12; "social trinity" criticised, 19; Vedic, 37; Brahmanic, 43; Christian dogma derived from Greek philosophy, 219; a historical evolution, 222; illustrated in case of *third* person, 222; the word trinity (Greek, τριάς, Latin, trinitas) does not appear till Theophilus (A. D. 168–188), 239.

Ulysses, hero of Odyssey, 106.

Vedas, 37.

Virgil, quoted, 16; Capitoline trinity in the Æneid, 120; fatalism, 121; Æneid compared with Odyssey, 122.

Virgin births, in Ethnic religions, 71.

Vishnu, incarnation of, 47.

Watts, Isaac, character of hymns, 318.

Westcott, Bishop, quoted, 15.

Wordsworth, quoted, 369.

Zend-Avesta, dates of, 67; completed before Christian era, 69; quoted, 91.

Zoroaster, whether a myth, or historical person, 51, 64; a practical reformer, 65; monotheist, 65; life largely legendary, 66; explanation of resemblances between lives of Z., Buddha, and Christ, 70; religious teachings of, 72; closely akin to later Judaism, 73; historical connection with J., 73.

Zoroastrianism, a reaction from polytheism, 64; its later dualism, an evolution, 65; post-exilic Jewish ideas derived from, 73; three stages in development of, 73; historical connection between Z. and Christian eschatology, 75.

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